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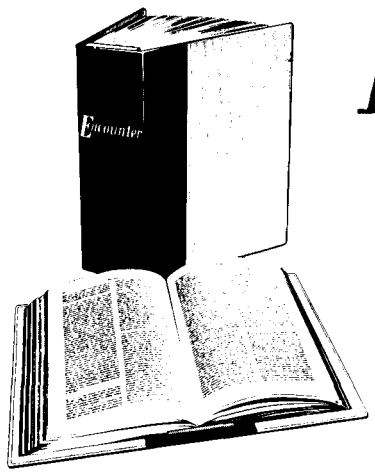

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DADDY'S GIRL *(story)* 3 *Helen Harris*

THE SYPHILITIC SHOCK: A NEW EXPLANATION OF THE WITCH-BURNINGS 7 *Stanislav Andreski*

GEORGE STEINER'S HITLER 27 *Hyam Maccoby*

THE DIARY OF NOBODY AT ALL 35 *Nikolai Tolstoy*

COLUMN 42 *M*

MEN & IDEAS

HOW ENLIGHTENED IS DIALECTICAL REASON"? 45 *Ernst Topitsch*

POEMS

Peter Porter 39, *Tony Harrison* 40, *John Gohorry* 87

NOTES & TOPICS

DIAL M FOR MURDOCH 56 *Edward Pearce*

A CZECH REFORMER'S VIEWS 59 *Zdenek Mlynar*

SPECIAL BOOK SECTION: STAGE & SCREEN

JOHN OSBORNE'S HATRED 63 *Benedict Nightingale*

THEATRE SUBSIDIES 70 *John Elsom*

ANALYSING FILM 75 *Charles Barr*

LANGUAGE

A BRIEF GUIDE TO SEMANTIC OBSESSION 80 *Rupert Wilkinson*

FILM

THE MISSING FUNERAL 88 *Ferdinand Mount*

BOXES

A University Under Martial Law (Letter from Poland) 60,
New York's Left: a "Moment of Truth"? (Christopher Hitchins) 82,
"The Hell of Castro's Jails" (Le Monde) 92,
Whose Double Standards? (Peregrine Worsthorne) 95

LETTERS 91

AUTHORS 96

LIFE & LETTERS 97

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Helen Harris

Daddy's Girl

IT IS SAID that when someone overeagerly, ostentatiously pulls someone else back from the edge of the road, to save them from being run down, underneath they really subconsciously want to push them out in front of the car. At least, that is what my daughter tells me and she is studying for her degree in psychology. So when young Bernard Stapleton, my number two in the economic planning department, yanked me back from the path of a delivery van on our way down to "The Coach and Horses" one lunchtime, it made me look at him in a new light. He had always seemed harmless enough, till then. He was an earnest boy, the sort who seems to make a tremendous effort to do anything, always gets himself involved in problems and sticky situations. But far from holding this clumsiness against him, I had even taken some pleasure in helping to get him out of the problems he had created; it was faintly gratifying to be the recipient of his strenuous gratefulness, made me feel, frankly, needed. As a worker, I had nothing to say against him. Apart from the occasional, slightly dubious sick Monday, he pulled his weight in the department. I had got into the habit of intimating, partly to spur him on, partly to retain his personal loyalty to me, that he would one day step into my shoes. We got on rather well together, I thought. Perhaps I was partially responsible for this unpleasant development because I had allowed a relationship to grow up that was not exclusively professional. (I realise that recounting all this takes rather a long time but I feel it explains why I was particularly distressed that it was at Bernard Stapleton that the finger of my daughter's suspicion should point.)

There were enough others I could have picked for the role into which she cast Bernard; Robert Fox-Cox, a trying young man in advertising, who spent his life making up in arrogance for his parents' asinine decision to ally their surnames at marriage, or Anthony Chorister, who behaved quite openly as though he considered me a tiresome old buffoon. But it seemed that it was Bernard who under his rather mild and ineffectual exterior, was really secretly straining to take my place. Apparently his action in pulling me back from in front of the van was actually the reflection of the forward thrusting movement by which he hoped to gain power.

Although this saddened me, I must say that when I thought it over, it made sense. Bernard Stapleton had perhaps never been quite as frank with me as I had imagined. There was the age difference, always an obstacle to straightforward communication, and his background, which I'm certain must have made him reticent in our company environment. He was probably always thanking his lucky stars to have been taken on by a company like ours and possibly he had got into the way of concealing his true nature in order to fit in. I suppose it was inevitable that in the long run this would warp the character of what I knew to have been at the outset an honourable, unfortunate boy.

He came from a pretty modest family, frankly nothing to be proud of. I recall his referee's letter, written by a Rev. A. Hardcastle, gave the impression of a boy who had worked diligently to overcome daunting, vaguely scandalous, personal obstacles. When I found out, not via Bernard himself, needless to say—people don't usually come clean about that sort of thing—but from a colleague whose Labrador had once been treated by Stapleton's father, a vet, in a previous position which my colleague had held up North, about the hard-drinking Northern father, the case of the race-

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horse which had caused him to be struck off and the shabby way he publicly treated Stapleton's mother, it seemed to tip the scales in Bernard's favour, as far as I was concerned. Our other shortlisted candidate was an Oxbridge chap, had everything going for him, and it was perhaps out of perversity, as well as pity, that I took on Bernard. My daughter encouraged me, at the time. She said it was a chance for me to redress the balance in favour of the underdog, strike a blow for the individual and all that. We even jokingly referred to Bernard as Mr Underdog at the beginning when she asked how he was getting on.

HELEN HAS ALWAYS taken an interest in my work. Her mother's death, when Helen was still quite small, rather threw us together and I soon grew into the way of discussing with Helen things I should in the normal course of events have discussed with Rose. It started as a game: "Do you think Daddy should go and have dinner with the boring Jameses or stay at home with you?" By the time she was grown up, the pattern was well established. I say "grown up" but actually Helen was always "grown up." Even as quite a little girl, she was splendidly poised and serious in her manner. People found it very charming. She could hold her own with adults at the dinner table from the age of twelve. Later on, when I got invitations tactlessly stating "wife", I sometimes used to take Helen along, rather enjoying the frantic jealousy that I knew she aroused in the other chaps. It was only natural that, in time, I should turn to her for support and advice.

But let me not be diverted. Bernard started work at our company under my personal supervision, and for nearly two and a half years I had nothing to say against him. He worked conscientiously, picked up his job quickly and didn't jar with the tone of the place at all. With Helen's insight, I did develop grave doubts about some other people during that period. It was Helen who first put me on the track of Mary Sheehy's personal problem and was, I suppose, ultimately responsible for the company sacking her. When we had the trouble over Nigel Clarke and the despatch boys, it was she who said to me, in one of our evening discussions, "But Daddy, hasn't it occurred to anyone that he must be gay?" And, sure enough, when I subtly intimated as much to Andrew Wilkinson in Personnel, he said at once that he had suspected it for years.

Helen has a lot of influence over my life, really. Sometimes I decide it has gone too far; the extent to which she dominates me is unnatural, unreasonable even. Then I travel up to her university for a weekend visit, inspect the set-up where she is living, take her out to lunch, give her a talking to about her boyfriends, generally remind her who's the boss. She seems to get the message all right; she always listens very attentively to what I have to say and I generally come back to town feeling I've made my point. Only I do tend to ring her with some trumped-up query soon afterwards, just to be sure I haven't alienated her.

Anyway, after the incident of the delivery van, I was distinctly cool to young Mr Stapleton for some weeks. Naturally, I was watching him like a hawk all the while. At the first sign of any more ominous designs on me, I would have been down on him like a ton of bricks. I caught myself thinking uncharitably that, with his antecedents, it was hardly surprising that Bernard Stapleton had turned out to be vicious. But he was obviously more crafty than I had given him credit for too. There was not the least clue that his attitude towards me was anything but respectful and sincere. To be on the safe side though, I stopped joining the lunchtime gatherings at "The Coach and Horses" and had sandwiches at my desk. (Not so much of a break, really, but there you are.) I was rewarded for my caution when I received a revelation I could well have done without. Anderson in Personnel, a bit of an old woman, with a complex to which Helen gave some convoluted, possibly sexual name, liked to drop in on me for a chat every now and then. (I dare say he imagined it was his duty to waste company money, standing around gossiping.) He told me, in the course of a lengthy chat, that Bernard Stapleton had agreed to give a talk at the company social club. The club was one of Anderson's little pet schemes; he had set it up to foster what he called "a spirit of love thy neighbour" and he was always chivvying us to contribute to his hobby-horse. I wouldn't have paid much attention if he hadn't told me, with great gusto, the subject of Bernard Stapleton's talk: "Martial Arts of the East."

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HELEN'S TERM ended. I always privately looked forward to that, although I knew that she didn't. Still, that was natural at her age; swapping the freedom and fun of the university for a dreary old father. I liked the turbulence she brought, the noise, the liveliness, the new ideas. After a few days' reserve, while we got back on to intimate terms, as it were, we would start to talk and the dear old tête-à-têtes were revived. Some of our conversations had been going on for years, interrupted only by Helen's terms, for she is fascinated by certain recurring themes, certain preoccupations.

Of course, I told her at once about Bernard Stapleton's talk. Funnily enough, she did not seem very interested, initially. She said the social club was a classic instance of work-orientated escapism and she wished I would broaden my horizons beyond the office. But a few days later, when she had got down to some more studying, she brought the subject up of her own accord at dinner and told me that repressed personalities like Bernard, who were incapable of expressing their aggression directly, often resorted to expressing it in a sublimated form by taking up some violent hobby such as boxing or shooting. She gave me an example from her textbook of a patient in a hospital for the criminally insane in Baltimore, who had apparently been a docile, courteous employee for many years, but a regular member of his local rifle club, and one day ran amok with his rifle in a department store and killed or injured eleven people. I must say, Bernard Stapleton did begin to seem a somewhat sinister, not to say positively dangerous character.

I went to his talk. It was a deliberate ploy, of course, to let him know that I realised what he was up to. It aroused some comment though, since I don't frequent that sort of thing normally. There was a bit of ribbing too; "Come to pick up a few tips to use on the boys from Market Analysis, eh Armstrong?" It was a curious talk. I listened attentively. It appeared there were various different branches of these war-like arts and Bernard, who had been an aficionado of such pursuits since school, was especially adept at one which combined physical and psychological ploys, called Aikido.

After the talk, there were coffee and biscuits but I thanked Bernard meaningly for a most enlightening talk and went home to Helen. It appeared that I had thoughtlessly forgotten to remind her that I would be in late because of the talk and she was nearly beside herself with worry. She shouted at me when I came in. "Wherever have you been? I thought maybe something had happened to you." I must confess I was privately rather touched by her concern and I promised that, in future, I would always let her know my whereabouts if there was any alteration to my usual routine.

IT WAS THE LONG summer vacation; long months of Helen, I had hoped. But, this year, one of her boyfriends was coming up to town and they were then going away on holiday together to Italy; a Tony. I have never liked Tonys. This one was a round-shouldered, furtive sort of chap. When he turned up to take Helen away, I couldn't help feeling that he was a pretty dubious person to accompany her and I was not over friendly to him. I told him, "Make sure you bring my daughter back in good shape", which made him giggle awkwardly, for some reason.

I was distinctly uneasy while she was away. I listened to the radio and read the papers for reports of earthquakes and kidnappings. A young couple was murdered on the Côte d'Azur, which gave me a nightmarish moment, but I reminded myself firmly that they had gone to Italy. Things didn't improve at work, either. It seemed odd after so many years with the company, but I did not really feel at home there any more. This was especially unfortunate because with only three years to go until my retirement, in the normal course of events I could have expected to sit back a bit, let the younger men take the reins and put my feet up. But I felt I had to be permanently on guard. It was as though I was surrounded by sharp critics and spies, all waiting eagerly to catch me out. I tried telling myself this was ridiculous. I sat it out, went on having my sandwich lunches by myself at my desk and waited for Helen to come home.

A postcard arrived from Siena. That Tony had signed it too. I found this peculiarly offensive. He had no business intruding into my relations with my daughter. I did not put the card up on our mantelpiece, where it would normally have taken pride of place. I actually tried to put it out of my mind.

Bernard Stapleton attempted to trip me up

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on the stairs. I know this must sound unlikely. But his attempt was unmistakable. There was no one else about and no earthly reason for him to pass so close to me. As soon as I had recovered my balance, I wheeled around. He had stopped too and I snapped, "What the hell are you playing at?" He looked aghast and then flushed a deep red. I turned away abruptly and carried on rather shakily down the stairs. I could hear that he hadn't moved and was presumably still standing staring after me. Before opening the door to the office I was visiting, I turned and shot him a deadly look. He was indeed staring after me, an expression of utter amazement on his face.

I was beside myself, not just with shock but with outrage; the impertinence of his action devastated me. I returned to my desk but sat there shaking all morning, unable to work. At lunchtime, I decided on confrontation and went down to "The Coach and Horses" for the first time in weeks. Bernard would realise it was an act of open challenge. I did not sit with the office group however, but took a seat alone at the far end of the bar. I wanted my position to be quite clear to everyone. I noticed the quizzical looks, but ignored them resolutely. Let young Mr Stapleton explain to them himself why I am ostracising him, I thought. I drank two pints of bitter and had to fight to keep awake all afternoon.

I WAS COUNTING the days to Helen's return. Perhaps people suspected my loneliness, for Gerald Williams, a senior colleague on the board, suddenly asked me out to lunch one day, for no apparent reason. We went to a nice little French place. I hadn't had a lunch like that for months; two colleagues decently sitting down to discuss company matters in a convivial atmosphere. I think I got a little expansive after the wine. I told Gerald about the troubles I was having in my department. I must say, he was very understanding; he said I was carrying more than my fair share of the company's burden and it was hardly surprising that the strain was telling. I felt quite a load off my mind afterwards.

When Helen came back from her holiday, I think she was genuinely shocked at how off-colour I was. Naughtily, I was glad to be able to secure her sympathy. She should realise that when she is away, I am deprived of my mainstay. But, so as not to cut too pathetic a figure, I kept quiet initially about how things had deteriorated at work. I tried to give the impression that I was fighting a brave battle against severe odds but that I was winning. I let her tell me about palazzos and piazzas, trattorias and tagliatellis. I did not like hearing her repeat "Tony and I" this, "Tony and I" that. I looked deliberately uninterested every time his name was mentioned so that eventually Helen was forced to say, "Well, and what's new in your world, Daddy?" I think she was distressed when I told her about how Bernard Stapleton had taken to coming into my office on various flimsy pretexts and loitering there in a menacing way until, one day, I could finally stand it no longer and virtually shrieked at him to get out and leave me alone. I told her how he had once sinisterly offered to fetch me my sandwiches from the take-away shop. I told her, naturally, about his attempt to trip me up on the stairs. I was staggered when she burst out, "Oh, for heaven's sake, I wish you'd stop going on and on about that wretched man. I'm sick and tired of hearing his name." For a silly moment, I was reminded of the rare tantrums she threw as a child when she thought I was becoming too absorbed in my own affairs and was jealous of whatever had taken my attention. And, almost as if to show me that she now had an equally absorbing interest of her own, she went out and had dinner with Tony on her second day back. I knew my interpretation of her temper was unfair, but at least Helen's outburst finally prompted me to act against Bernard Stapleton once and for all. For while I could doubtless have stood his heavy-handed persecution on my own account a little longer, I was not prepared to have Helen upset by it too.

I HOPE I will get used to being at home all day. I know there are plenty of others in my position, invited to take early retirement. These are ruthless times. But the days do seem extraordinarily long without the rewarding intervals of meetings and lunch hours. I wander around this empty house like a soul seeking rest. I could put up with it much better if Helen were here more. But she is forever disappearing to go and visit that Tony, although I have tried to tell her that no good will come of it.

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Stanislav Andreski

The Syphilitic Shock

A new Explanation of the "Great Witch Craze" of the 16th and 17th Centuries in the light of Medicine and Psychiatry

THE WITCH HUNTS of the 16th and 17th century present one of the most bizarre and gruesome spectacles to be found in the history of mankind. My interest was drawn to this extraordinary phenomenon in connection with a critique of Max Weber's concept of rationalisation which can be shown as misleading on various other grounds as well, but which the evidence of the Witch Hunts suffices to discredit. For how can we speak of the European outlook or the Western way of life becoming more "rational" or "rationalised" during the era when people were in the grip of a mania which fits better the label of irrationality than any other form of mass behaviour recorded by history?

Unless we want to make it synonymous with the lack of knowledge or with error (and therefore superfluous as a concept) we must define irrationality as an attitude to knowledge, characterised by the inclination to hold on to a belief or to persist in the choice of a means to a given end, despite the availability of the knowledge which shows it to be erroneous. With this definition, we cannot say that the Dobu islanders' beliefs about witchcraft were irrational since, given their knowledge, they had no good reasons for regarding them as false. In contrast, we can assert that the striking spread of preoccupation with witchcraft in Europe after 1500, which continued for more than a century, did constitute a growth of irrationality because it occurred despite the accumulation of knowledge. We cannot explain Isaac Newton's credulity by supposing that he did not know enough to appreciate the reasons which led Francis Bacon or Michel de Montaigne to incredulity a century earlier. The eagerness to silence the critics by censorship and persecution suggests that the theoreticians of witch hunts did not feel completely secure in their beliefs. As is well known, anyone who criticised the beliefs or procedures was accused of being in league with devils and witches, and therefore a witch himself.

There are many gripping and exhaustive accounts of the facts but the explanations are few, and even the most ingenious of them seem to me inadequate—at least in the sense that although they may explain a particular feature within a given region, they fail to account for the generality of the phenomenon. However, might we not suppose that there is no need for a general explanation because the same kind of behaviour was prompted by different circumstances in each region? I don't see how one could refute conclusively such an interpretation; but it seems very improbable that a clustering of such activities could be due to sheer coincidence. However, perhaps we could be satisfied with regarding it simply as a wave of imitation, with the added (and well-founded) assumption that absurdity does not preclude imitation.

This point raises great difficulties. The propensity to imitate undoubtedly constitutes one of the most fundamental characteristics of our species, ineradicably rooted in its social nature. For any single individual, this propensity provides a sufficient explanation of why he resembles in so many ways those among whom he lives. On the collective level, moreover, there is something which might be called the momentum of a wave of imitation. Once a pattern of behaviour has been widely imitated, it acquires a self-perpetuating force which is (at least partly) independent of the circumstances which promoted it initially. This factor must be taken into account despite our inability to assess its weight within a degree of approximation which is better than very rough. However, the propensity to imitate—which is universal and probably constant among large populations—cannot explain why in a given time and place a certain pattern is imitated rather than another. We must, therefore, search for factors which might have predisposed people to imitate what they did. Our explanation, moreover, must be in terms of phenomena of the same order of generality as the explanandum.

I wish to make clear that I am offering no

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explanation of why people believe in magic or in witchcraft, which is a special form of it. I merely note that in all pre-scientific cultures people think that you can harm or help other persons (or yourself, for that matter) by pronouncing certain words ("incantations") or performing certain acts ("rituals"). Many illustrious thinkers—from Herbert Spencer and Edward Tylor to Emile Durkheim and Bronislaw Malinowski—have addressed themselves to the task of explaining the universality of such beliefs, and I have nothing new to add on this question. My sole purpose here is to explain the changes which occurred in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries.

THERE IS a consensus among the historians that the Witch Craze was not a continuation of the tradition but something unprecedented in its intensity which was connected with a striking change in the attitude of the Church. According to Hugh Trevor-Roper:

> "In the eighth century, we find St Boniface, the English apostle of Germany, declaring roundly that to believe in witches and werewolves is unchristian. In the same century Charlemagne decreed the death penalty for anyone who, in newly converted Saxony, burnt supposed witches. Such burning, he said, was 'a pagan custom.' In the next century, St Agobard, Bishop of Lyon, repudiated the belief that witches could make bad weather and another unknown Church dignitary declared that night-flying and metamorphosis were hallucinations and that whoever believed in them 'is beyond doubt an infidel and a pagan.' This statement was accepted into the canon law and became known as the *canon Episcopi or capitulum Episcopi*. It remained the official doctrine of the Church. In the eleventh century the laws of King Coloman of Hungary declined to notice witches 'since they do not exist', and the twelfth-century John of Salisbury dismissed the idea of a witches' sabbat as a fabulous dream. In the succeeding centuries, when the craze was being built up, all this salutary doctrine would have to be reversed. The laws of Charlemagne and Coloman would be forgotten; to deny the reality of night-flying and metamorphosis would be officially declared heretical; the witches' sabbat would become an objective fact, disbelieved only (as a doctor of the Sorbonne would write in 1609) by those of unsound mind; and the ingenuity of churchmen and lawyers would be taxed to explain away that inconvenient text of canon law, the *canon Episcopi*. . . ."[1]

The oldest explanation—which goes back to the wonderfully brave eye-witness critics of this practice—attributes it to ignorance and stupidity. No doubt the general ignorance of the population still uninfluenced by the discoveries of science constituted a general underlying condition; but we have no evidence that ignorance or stupidity increased in other fields of culture. So we would have a perfectly circular explanation if we took the persecution of witches as evidence of the state of mind to which this practice is attributed.

Like many people after them, the 18th-century philosophers regarded Witch Trials as a relic of the barbarian past to which the Enlightenment based on science had put an end. Their view of why these trials ceased is perfectly tenable because it is true that this occurred at the time when the discoveries of science began to influence the outlook of all educated persons. However, because historical research was only in its very beginnings, these thinkers did not know that the two centuries which preceded theirs did not represent a fair picture of the earlier times, and that never before had the Europeans been so obsessed with this particular superstition as during the two centuries which witnessed the birth of science and revival of scholarship and philosophy. The great intensification of the persecutions at such a time demands a specific explanation which cannot be in terms of sheer inertia of tradition. On the other hand, the common acceptance of the belief in witchcraft was an underlying and pre-existing condition without which the said intensification could not have occurred, and which can be attributed to cultural inertia and some very widely spread mental tendencies. However, inertia of old beliefs may have accounted up to a point for the behaviour of peasants but not for the well-documented change in the attitude of the intellectuals who abandoned the limited scepticism of their predecessors, became just as (if not more) obsessed with the fear of witches as the peasants, and played a crucial role in inciting and organising the hunts.

Explanations

LET ME BEGIN a brief survey of the explanations of the great Witch-Hunt with the latest, which also happens to be the flimsiest.

In her book, *Die Hexen der Neuzeit*,[2] Claudia Honegger interprets the Witch Trials as a part of the process (if not a deliberate method) of lowering women's status and bolstering up patriarchy. Although not all historians would agree with her assessment of the trend, let us assume that she is

[1] H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (1967), pp. 92-3.

[2] Claudia Honegger, *Die Hexen der Neuzeit*, (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978).

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right in what she says about the changes in "the position of women." Even if we admitted that the wave of Witch Trials did contribute to a lowering of this position, it would not follow that one would have discovered their hidden purpose. Such a conclusion would be warranted only if we had grounds for believing that Witch Trials were motivated (if not entirely, then at least to a large extent) by the desire to subjugate the female population.

The first reason for rejecting such a surmisal is that too many men and boys were burnt. It is true—and it is a fact which I shall endeavour to explain—that at the beginning of the 16th century, not only did the number of the victims drastically increase, but also the sex ratio among them changed to women's disadvantage. None the less, in absolute numbers the number of male victims also seems to have increased, and they constituted (according to the estimates summarised by Jean Delumeau[3]) about one-fourth or one-fifth of the total number. Even if it is true (as some historians maintain) that males constituted only 10% or 15% of the victims, it is scarcely conceivable that so many men would have been burnt if the aim were to frighten women into submission.

An equally strong argument against viewing witch-burning as a strategy of "sex war" is that resorting to it would be as rational as using a sledge-hammer to crack a nut: it is better to have a slave than a corpse, and there is no need for torture and burning when simple beating would be enough for the purpose. The Moslems have always maintained women in much greater subjection without a recourse to the methods of the witch-hunters. In our own days, Khomeini and his faithful have been able to roll back in Iran the world-wide tide of women's emancipation and to put them back into a very inferior position with the aid of intimidation backed up by a few stonings.

MORE INGENIOUS is the explanation put forth by Keith Thomas.[4] As is fashionable nowadays, Thomas turns to the economic factors but he adds an interesting application of some psychological or psychoanalytic concepts. The influence of capitalism upon rural life, according to his thesis, led to the destruction of village solidarity and a clash between the duty to help the unfortunate neighbours and the pursuit of self-enrichment. People who were growing rich no longer complied with this duty, but the tradition was still strong enough to make them feel guilty about keeping all their wealth for themselves. Now, according to the psychoanalysts, when feelings of guilt are repressed from the consciousness, they tend to be "projected" on to those who have been wronged. The wrongdoer denies that he has wronged them, and not only imputes to the wronged hostile feelings towards him, but also convinces himself that they are actively doing or have done something to harm him. Refusing help to poor old women would be especially likely to make the budding capitalists feel guilty, and therefore poor old women would be the most common objects of a "projection" which would then prompt suspicions and accusations. Thomas backs his thesis by an examination of the materials from the English courts, where he finds that a victim of accusation has often been previously refused aid.

Although it is quite possible that situations of this kind did on some occasions trigger off a victimisation, as a general explanation Thomas' thesis seems inadequate despite its ingenuity. Firstly, on psychological grounds. A "projection" of guilt could have prompted avoidance or further harassment of the wronged without going to such extremes. It could also have led to an espousal of a belief which justified the refusal to help and removed the feelings of guilt. Indeed, the link between John Calvin's doctrine of predestination and the development of capitalism probably rested on its appeal as a justification for leaving the poor to their fate, on the grounds that they are poor because they have been damned by God. Perhaps quite often the process of "repressing" and "projecting" such guilt feelings might have determined who was picked up for victimisation once the hunt was on; but it is difficult to imagine how it could have produced the widely shared obsessional fear which constituted the necessary background of these events.

A comparative view yields an even more decisive argument against accepting Keith Thomas' thesis as a general explanation. If the Witch Craze had been a by-product of development of Capitalism, it should have been most virulent where this development started earliest or went furthest—Italy, the Low Countries, and England—and this was not the case. Indeed, though affected, these countries suffered a good deal less than France and Germany where the village community was much less (indeed, hardly at all) disturbed by new capitalist enterprise. Furthermore, in neither of these countries had there been a clustering of the trials around the centres of capitalism—the Hanseatic cities or Paris—while many of the bloodiest persecutions occurred in remote rural areas like the foothills of the Alps or Aquitaine. It appears from the not exactly comparable estimates made by A. Macfarlane and G. F. Black,[5] that about 20 times more witches were burnt in rustic and sparsely

[3] Jean Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident* (Paris, Fayard, 1978).

[4] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971).

[5] A survey of these and other estimates can be found in Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident*, p. 456.

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inhabited Scotland than in the five counties round London, the population of which was not much smaller. The craze reached Poland late and began to rage only during the 17th century when the cities were decaying and the very rudimentary capitalism was in full regression.

The final argument against Keith Thomas' thesis as a general explanation is that what he says about the social positions of the victims he has studied does not seem to apply to other samples. Soldan, Heppe and Bauer[6] give long lists of victims in various places in Germany where we find traders, artisans, squires, priests, burgomasters and even a High Court judge. Only the high nobility are absent. In her study of Luxembourg, Dupont-Bouchat[7] found mayors, magistrates and rich merchants, while E. W. Monter[8] found wives of men of equivalent rank among the victims of the trials in the Jura.

THE SAME ARGUMENT APPLIES with an even greater force against the view put forth by Jeanne Favret[9] that the Witch Hunts formed a part of (or were a manifestation of) "class conflict."

The persecutions, she argues, were instigated not by peasants but by the judges, whose motive was fear of the counter-culture of the weak. This last point is an unwarranted extrapolation of a notion which was perhaps not without applicability to the recent situation in France and a few other countries in 1968 when the "hippies" were throwing gauntlets to the "squares." Perhaps also the ideas and the way of life of the anarchist and communist groups, which have kept on springing up since the French Revolution, could be regarded as a "counter-culture" which presented a challenge to the established culture and, therefore, inspired fear in the official circles. As far as the old Europe is concerned, there is no evidence that the folkways of peasants (let alone of the starving vagabonds) were regarded as a danger or a challenge by royalty and the nobility. Nor could the rebellious peasants think of any innovations, and they justified their complaints by traditional references to the Bible. True, the nobility did have reasons to fear the numerical strength of the peasants; but they always took good precautions to keep them under the yoke, and did not need the pretext of witchcraft to mete out atrocious punishments. The sanguinary reprisals against peasant uprisings and banditry claimed many more victims than the Witch Trials: instead of individual burnings, entire fields were covered with impaled rebels. The Witch Hunts, moreover, would have been a very inappropriate method of nipping resistance in the bud because they were biased not against the most dangerous category—young men—but against the least dangerous—old women. True, even lonely and poor old women were evidently regarded as dangerous by powerful and rich men: but the question is *why*?

Favret is on safer ground when she claims that most of the processes were initiated by the judges or judicial officials. This is confirmed by Baschwitz and Mandrou;[10] and it is hardly surprising since they had the power. On the other hand, there are many examples of popular initiative and lynchings even when the trials were already forbidden by the princes or the parliament as was the case in Poland. The "Witch-Finder General", Matthew Hopkins, for example, started a business after the Civil War, travelling to various places in England at the request of the local population in the grip of a panic, and receiving payment from them piece-rate. The fact that most of the victims were peasants (57% on Delumeau's reckoning) proves no bias against them since everywhere they constituted at least 8/10ths (if not 9/10ths) of the population. In any case, too many victims were of respectable status to permit an interpretation of the Witch Trials as a method of keeping down the poor.

Matthew Hopkins, Witch Finder (1657)

[6] Wilhelm Gottlieb Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse: Aus den Quellen dargestellt* (Stuttgart, 1843; ed. Heppe, 1880; rev. ed. Bauer, Munich 1912).

[7] As summarised in Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident.*

[8] E. William Monter, "Witchcraft in Geneva", *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 43 (1971).

[9] Jeanne Favret, "Sorcières et Lumières", *Critique*, Vol. 27 (1971).

[10] Kurt Baschwitz, *Hexen und Hexenprozesse* (dtv, Munich); Robert Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVIIe siècle: Une analyse de psychologie historique* (Paris, 1968).

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ALAN MACFARLANE'S EXPLANATION is also economic but he combines it (in contrast with Keith Thomas) with some ideas brought from anthropology rather than psychoanalysis.[11] He also thinks that the wave of Witch Trials was caused by "the rise of capitalism" but sees the connection as the opposite of a Class Conflict. His materials show that the accusations were usually made against neighbours or at least persons with whom the accusers had been in close contact. This means that the Witch Hunts were a grass-roots movement rather than something engineered "from above", which is the opposite of the picture given by Mandrou.[12] Personally, I doubt whether either of them is wrong about the cases which he examined; it seems to me clear that their materials simply illustrate the variations which did in fact occur.

Macfarlane takes his clue from the studies of Witchcraft in contemporary Africa where the anthropologists have noticed that (contrary to what might be expected *a priori*) townsmen, who appear to be modernised, engage in witchcraft more readily than people who have remained in tribal villages hardly touched by the science-based civilisation. This paradox was first reported by Monica Hunter-Wilson in 1935, in her book, *Reaction to Conquest*. Her explanation was that witchcraft is more tempting when additional curbs are put on physical violence, while everyday conflicts become more intractable owing to the absence or irrelevance of regulation by deeply-rooted customs. Many later studies have corroborated this view. Macfarlane applies this interpretation to the England of the 17th century and maintains that the penetration of monetary economy into the villages disclocated the traditional structure, bred more frequent and intense conflicts, and thereby stimulated Witchcraft.

THE FIRST OBJECTION against Macfarlane's thesis is the same as against Keith Thomas': namely, that a comparative survey reveals little (if not an inverse) connection between the development of capitalism and the dimensions of the persecutions. The second weakness of the thesis is the assumption that an increase in the number of trials indicates more frequent recourse to witchcraft. We may believe the anthropologists who tell us that they have observed such an increase in Africa. About the 17th century we have no statements from independent observers, trained in objectivity and free to report. Confessions wrung out by torture tell us nothing except what the tormentors wanted to hear. Nor does the number of accusations prove anything about the frequency of the practice. For how can I know that someone is bewitching me in secret unless his incantations and rites do in fact produce the desired effect? On the other hand, if people are in the habit of attributing their ills to witchcraft, then any increase in misfortunes will prompt an increase in the number of accusations.

Nor can we presume that there is a close connection between intensity of conflicts and frequency of accusations, unless we have grounds for presupposing that the beliefs are unchanging. You can have plenty of conflict of the most murderous kind without any accusations of witchcraft. The intensification of the practice of witchcraft in African cities during recent decades has produced no court proceedings against witches because officials regarded it all as a superstition. So we can infer nothing about the practice from the court records. All we know is that the fear spread, and people became more eager to search for witches and to punish them.

WE MUST BEAR IN MIND that the changes in the European societies of the 17th century were very much slower than the upheaval wrought in the lives of African tribesmen by the impact of a fully-fledged industrial civilisation. And for this reason they could not have brought disorientation and uprooting on the same scale. We have, therefore, no grounds for even suspecting that the same causal link was involved. Some historians' love for the word "Revolution" should not lead us to forget that economic changes in the previous centuries to which this label is often affixed (including the so-called Industrial Revolution) were so slow that they escaped the notice of most people who lived through them. We must conclude, therefore, that, though interesting and ingenious, Macfarlane's thesis offers no adequate explanation.

More plausible is H. R. Trevor-Roper's view[13] linking the Witch Craze with the Wars of Religion. Whereas the changes in the economy (other than natural calamities) were almost imperceptible, wars did bring violent shocks and upheavals, and evoked waves of emotion of an altogether different dimension from what might be generated by the slow processes of commercialisation of personal relations and disintegration of village solidarity. One can well imagine how, faced with devastation and slaughter, gripped by fear and inclined to look for scapegoats, superstitious people would succumb to an obsession with witches. And it is true that the biggest hunts occurred in Germany, which was more devastated by the wars than any other country.

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[11] Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (1970).

[12] Robert Mandrou, "*Magistrats et sorciers* . . .".

[13] "The European Witch-craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", first published in ENCOUNTER (May–June 1967) and reprinted in Trevor-Roper's *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change.*

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On the other hand, the correspondence is only very broad—by country (in the sense of a cultural area) and epoch—and is not evident region-by-region and year-by-year, as many of the big Witch Hunts took place in regions unscourged by wars. Furthermore, we cannot explain something unprecedented by something of much more common occurrence—many wars, just as sanguinary as those of the 16th and the 17th centuries, have been waged before, and since, without provoking Witch Hunts. Another weakness of this explanation is that no one has shown what the psychological mechanism would be which would link fighting and war with an obsession with witches. The soldiers of those times were habitual looters and rapists, inclined to maltreat all defenceless people. But why should they have wanted to burn women rather than merely abuse them? Nor do we have any grounds for supposing that the civilians must have become obsessed with fear of witches because they lived in fear of the soldiers. In most wars civilians were afraid of soldiers' depredations, but even at the height of the Witch Craze there is no evidence that anyone blamed witches for causing wars or the havoc wrought by these, although they were held responsible for disease. This is perfectly understandable: people could see the soldiers killing, burning and looting—there was no mystery about it—but they knew nothing about bacteria.

Trevor-Roper's thesis could be defended by pointing out that he speaks of the Wars of Religion rather than wars pure and simple. But what are "wars of religion"? The explanation clearly falls short if we mean thereby wars between collectivities holding different religions, because no one claims that the wars between the Christians and the Moslems or the Catholics and the Greek-Orthodox provoked waves of witch-hunting. However, the distinguishing feature which the historians have in mind when they use the expression in question is wars accompanied by forcible conversions or by extermination of heretics. Thus restricted, the thesis becomes more defensible but remains, none the less, defective because there seems to be no co-variation before the 16th century. One of the most ferocious wars of religion was the crusade against the Albigenses in the 13th century; yet there is no evidence that it was accompanied by witch hunts as distinct from the persecution of the heretics. The same can be said about the wars against the Hussites and the sanguinary suppression of the Lollards by Henry V in the 15th century. At the other end (as Kurt Baschwitz emphasises), witch trials went on after the Peace of Westphalia.[14]

Like Stalin's chief prosecutor, Andrei Vishinsky, the Medieval and Renaissance theologians and lawyers were unsparing in heaping up reasons for a condemnation: witches were held to be guilty of heresy in the shape of the pact with Satan, while heretics were commonly accused of witchcraft and sexual vice, especially sodomy and incest, as well as of theft, robbery, arson, poisoning the wells and what-not. The practice of burning people alive was used extensively in Spain to force the conversion of Jews and Moslems before it was employed in Witch Hunts. Spain, however, never experienced the massive witch hunts of the kind that afflicted northern Europe. Consequently, despite its prominent role in many witch trials, we cannot regard the Inquisition as the sole instigator in view of the fact that it rejected this role in the country where it developed fastest and furthest. In any case, many more persons were put to death for heresy than for witchcraft. To punish someone for heresy there was no need to trump up charges on another score. Why, then, should a suppression of heresy lead to a hunt for witches?

Though indiscriminate in heaping up abuse, the persecutors discriminated between witches and heretics in penal procedure. A heretic could often save his skin by recantation and repentance (as did Galileo) whereas to a witch this escape route was normally closed. Heretics and rebels were very often burnt or impaled summarily on flimsy evidence, without waiting for their confessions. This could be done because many of them had in fact done or said what they were accused of. Extracting confessions through torture was essential if witches were to be found at all, as there could have been no proper evidence because the victims could not have done what they were accused of.

THE WEIGHTIEST ARGUMENT against explaining witch hunts in terms of any form of "struggle for power" stems from the predominance of women among the victims and the inclusion of a good number of children, which is exactly the contrary to what happens in wars and political or religious persecutions. Usually only men are killed, while women and children are enslaved or otherwise ill-used. With extremely few exceptions, not only the top leaders but also all the lower-rank organisers and preachers of all religious or political movements noted in history have been men; which explains the aforementioned fact that repression has always been directed mainly at men. The Witch Hunters, in contrast, more often picked on women who, moreover, were commonly single and poor, or at least neither rich nor powerful, and therefore of all kinds of people were the least likely to represent a danger to the authorities. Soldan, Heppe and Bauer[15] give lists of victims of trials in various German cities. Among these about every fifteenth person is a child; e.g. a blind beggar girl aged 11,

[14] Baschwitz, *Hexen und Hexenprozesse.*
[15] Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse.*

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two brothers aged 10 and 11, a shoemaker's apprentice aged 13. On the other hand, in the same series of trials, we also find a gravedigger aged 42, a mother of three children aged 24, a single woman aged 32, a burgomaster's wife and a priest of unspecified age. The two youngest victims were aged 6 and 8. With victims of this kind, it is completely implausible to interpret the Witch Hunts as some kind of a purge or repression of enemies. (We must also bear in mind that any form of such an interpretation contradicts flatly the explanations offered by Keith Thomas and Alan Macfarlane.)

A slight variant along the lines of a political explanation is the view (the most widely held among the British historians) that the Witch Hunts were the outcome of the momentum of the machinery of repression which, once set up by the Church for purpose of hunting heretics, went on grinding lesser deviants perhaps because the inquisitors found themselves with nothing to do once heresy had been stamped out but wanted to keep themselves in business. This explanation rests upon an implicit assumption that no other potential victims were available, and this is rather far-fetched. Even if they ran out of known heretics, why couldn't the inquisitors pick on suspects, sinners, usurers, or some ethnic or occupational category? Moreover it would be easy to find victims whose possessions were a little more substantial than what most people accused of witchcraft had. Persecutions of Jews often brought substantial booty, but witch hunts were only occasionally profitable, and then mostly only to low-grade personnel like executioners to whom a few odd household goods made a difference. So an economic motive for keeping the repression going can be ruled out. On the other hand, the explanation in terms of the momentum of repression does not fit the crucial fact of the shift in the sex ratio among the victims after 1500. After that date heretics continued to be mostly men whereas witches were mostly women. There are many historical examples of the machinery of terror acquiring a momentum of its own and overshooting the purpose for which it was set up—they range from the carnage launched by the ancient Chinese emperor Wu to Stalin's purges and the rule of Idi Amin in Uganda. In all such cases, however, the overwhelming majority of the victims were men. The shift in the sex ratio is unique.

THE PROTESTANTS' ADDICTION to witch-hunting provides an equally decisive argument against any explanation invoking the inertia of the institutions, because the Reformation consisted above all of the destruction of the hierarchic edifice of the Church, including the Inquisition. Owing to the absence of centralised control the Witch Hunts in Protestant lands tended to be grass-roots affairs (which, incidentally, may account for the difference between the findings of Mandrou and those of Thomas and Macfarlane); but obsessive fear was just as much in evidence. Luther, Calvin and their followers discarded many of the deeply-rooted tenets of the old Church but fully upheld the notions about witches.

Why? This agreement not only could not stem from but was actually contrary to their idea of going back to the Bible (since no justification could be found there for the persecutions). The teachings of the New Testament are wholly opposed to sanguinary barbarities, and it disregards this particular superstition. True, the Old Testament mentions witches but only casually and bears no trace of an obsession with danger from them. The doctrinal justification for the persecutions was provided by the Catholic theologians whom Luther and Calvin execrated. In Scotland the bloodiest hunts were carried out by the Calvinist zealots following in the footsteps of John Knox; so that there the greatest carnage occurred after the destruction of the old machinery of repression. An explanation in terms of "momentum" can, then, be dismissed. The concordance of attitudes between embattled enemies can cease to be shrouded in mystery only if we can discover circumstances which affected them all regardless of their affiliations and their hate for one another.

In his erudite and massive Ph.D. thesis (submitted to the University of Reading under the title "The Politics of Danger"), Ronald Vanelli presents witchcraft accusations as a scapegoating mechanism which off-loads tensions generated by conflicts which threaten some people's self-image, status, and power. Although the work offers many valuable sidelights, the defect of this view is that it attempts to explain something which is far from ubiquitous by a factor which is (since in every human society there are struggles for esteem and power). Nor is there any evidence that "threats to self-image" were more common where persecutions of witches were taking place than elsewhere. The focus on dangers to esteem and self-esteem stems, I suspect, from a culturally self-centred outlook of a denizen of an affluent and well-medicated society, able to forget about the dangers which inspired the most pervasive fear in earlier times, as they still do in the less fortunate parts of the globe: famine and disease.

THE WORD "DISEASE" provides the clue: but, before following it, we must glance at one more interpretation. Writing before the present fad and fashion of always seeking economic or political explanations, Margaret Murray[16] depicted the Witch Hunts as a

[16] Margaret Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe: A Study in Anthropology* (1921).

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repressive action of the Christian Churches against the remnants of the pre-Christian religions. Persons burnt as witches were, according to Murray, the priests and, above all, priestesses of the old religion. Their rituals were misrepresented and dubbed as witchcraft. The reunions labelled as "Witches' Sabbaths" did in fact take place, although not in the form described by the demonologists but rather as regular worship of the old pagan gods. The numerical predominance of women among the victims is explained by their greater attachment to the tradition and the central role of home worship in the pre-Christian religions which had more priestesses than priests.

However, it seems highly implausible that the Church would have waited so many centuries—in the former domains of the Roman Empire more than a thousand years—before launching an attack on the pagan priesthoods. An even greater weakness stems from the assumption that there was a good deal of truth in the confessions. True, Margaret Murray and her followers rely on records from English courts where the dreadful tortures employed on the Continent were not used. Nevertheless, the accused were locked up in cold, dark and damp dungeons; they were starved, deprived of sleep and beaten. Friedrich Spee, one of the brave opponents (whose book inaugurated the waning of the hunts and who had been a confessor of the accused), wrote:

> "We would all have confessed to being witches if we had been tortured. . . ."[17]

Furthermore, many victims admitted flying on broomsticks, causing storms, and performing other impossible deeds. Why then should we assume that there must be some truth in what they said about acts which we deem possible? Under torture, many Jews have confessed to "poisoning the wells", killing little Christian boys, and squeezing their blood into Passover bread. Following Murray's method we would have to assume that, because such deeds were physically possible, there must have been some truth in the confessions, despite the obvious untruth of the confessions about making Christ's blood flow by piercing the Eucharist with a knife or causing pestilence.

Keith Thomas, Jean Delumeau, and some other historians who have examined the same materials say that Margaret Murray and her followers make a very arbitrary selection of very late documents. As I have not studied these sources, I have no opinion on this matter; but it seems to me impossible that an organised religion could be widely practised for a thousand years without being detected and attacked by the Church until the 16th century. As a matter of fact, the pre-Christian religions were suppressed by Draconian punishments much earlier. Charlemagne slaughtered the pagan priests in Saxony. In the 11th century there was a large uprising in Poland led by pagan priests which was drowned in blood. It might have been prompted by the dreadful punishments ordered by King Boleslaw the Valiant (Chrobry) for non-compliance with the rules of Christianity: such as pulling out teeth for eating meat on Fridays, or cutting off the tongue for blasphemy. There are records of campaigns against pagan priests in Scandinavia; but they all took place soon after the implantation of Christianity. As there is no shred of evidence of a pagan threat to Christianity in the 16th century, Margaret Murray's thesis is untenable, particularly as the authors of demonological treatises speak of the plague of witches as something new.

IN VIEW OF THE FACT that all the hitherto advanced explanations are either inadequate or simply false, as well as mutually contradictory, we would be faced with a complete mystery if no more plausible explanation could be devised. I contend, however, that there is an explanation which fits the data much better than than any of the preceding and subsumes those of their points which retain some validity.

The Fatal Clue

THE INCLINATION to seek the causes of illness in witchcraft is by no means a peculiarity of Europeans in early modern times but an almost universal (if not absolutely universal) feature of all pre-scientific cultures, although the role of witchcraft varies greatly in details and importance. While the Pygmies of the Congo pay scant attention to witchcraft, the Azande (to take another African example) see in it the cause of all illness. The Europeans of the 16th century did not go so far as the Azande and, acquainted with the works of Hippocrates through the writings of Galen, they conceived of other causes of disease such as bad air or food. However, even the most enlightened of them (who regarded the stories of witches flying on broomsticks and feasting with Satan as fairy tales) did not deny that illness *could* be caused by witchcraft. To understand their outlook we must bear in mind that, as scientific medicine did not yet exist, there were no compelling reasons for excluding this possibility. Indeed, the practice of medicine was still thoroughly mixed up with magic. Given the state of knowledge and the nature of the beliefs, it was inevitable that any epidemic would fan the fear of witches and prompt a multiplication of suspicions, accusations and persecutions. The epidemic which coincided chronologically with the Witch Craze was that of syphilis.

Syphilis was either brought to Europe by the

[17] Baschwitz, *Hexen und Hexenprozesse.*

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sailors of Columbus or underwent a mutation at the beginning of the 16th century which greatly increased its virulence.[18] Perhaps a milder strain existed in the Old World before a more powerful variant was brought from America. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that there was a terrible epidemic from the beginning of the 16th century until the second half of the 17th. Innumerable sources bear ample witness to the havoc it wrought and the dread it inspired. It was known from the beginning that it was transmitted through copulation. The following extract from an entry on The Harlot in an anonymous book called *The Profane State*, published during the reign of Charles I, illustrates the common notions:

> "*She* [the harlot] *dieth commonly of a lothsome disease*. I mean that disease, unknown to Antiquity, created within some hundreds of years, which took the name from Naples. When hell invented new degrees in sinnes, it was time for heaven to invent new punishments. Yet is this new disease now grown so common and ordinary, as if they meant to put divine Justice to a second task to find out a newer. And now it is high time for our Harlot, being grown lothsome to her self, to runne out of her self by repentance.
>
> Some conceive that when King Henrie the eighth destroyed the publick Stews in this Land (which till his time stood on the banks side on Southwark next the Bear-garden, beasts and beastly women being very fit neighbours) he rather scattered than quenched the fire of lust in this kingdome, and by turning the flame out of the chimney where it had a vent, more endangered the burning of the Commonwealth. But they are deceived: for whilst the Laws of the Land tolerated open uncleannesse, God might justly have made the whole State do penance for whoredome; whereas now that sinne though committed, yet not permitted, and though (God knows) it be too generall, it is still but personall."

Although it might have been counter-productive rather than helpful for avoiding contagion, and must have had deleterious effects on health in other ways, the closing of public baths is a measure of the fear of syphilis. Medieval towns had public baths where all orders of society (or almost all) were wont to go and wallow collectively, male and female naked together. These became very rare or disappeared altogether. For example, in Frankfurt, which had 40 such establishments in 1400, there were only 9 in 1530. In the same period, wooden bathtubs disappeared from inns and hotels throughout Europe. Only in Finland and in Budapest under the Ottoman rule did the public town-baths survive. The public baths which came into existence in France in the late 17th century (that is, when the epidemic of syphilis was on the wane) were public only in the sense that anyone could go in for a high fee—which meant that they were available only to the rich—but the bathing was individual.

AN ILLNESS caught through sin, which was not only fatal but also repulsive, would inevitably evoke harrowing feelings of shame, guilt, and rage against the partner presumed to have transmitted the disease. The psychological mechanism of generalisation and stereotyping would tend to produce in the sufferers a hostile attitude to the other sex, which through imitation and the stimulus of generalised fear would spread among healthy individuals as well. Furthermore, according to psychoanalytic theory, the stronger the feelings of guilt, the more likely they are to be projected—that is repressed from consciousness and imputed to others. The belief in witchcraft constituted a particularly suitable vehicle for such a projection, permitting a displacement of the feelings of guilt by a grievance about being bewitched. These mechanisms would operate in women as well as men; but men ruled and therefore their inclinations determined the course of events.

Crucially important was the fact that public opinion was moulded chiefly by the clergy, who were under the obligation to lead exemplary lives and in the Catholic Church to observe chastity. They therefore had reason to feel guilt and shame with special poignancy and would be particularly prone to seek scapegoats on whom these feelings could be projected, and who could be sacrificed in expiation. The strength of these feelings would fuel the psychological mechanism of generalisation and stereotyping through which the hate against the partner, from whom the disease might have been contracted, would be extended to others. In principle, the process of generalisation of attitudes can operate upon any common feature. But, here, since all the resentment came from the consequences of the sexual act, the stereotype would be naturally extended to the entire opposite sex, while the most defenceless members thereof would be most likely to be picked on as scapegoats.

TO REPEAT, THERE IS no reason to suppose that this mechanism did not operate among women. It is very likely that the epidemic of syphilis did evoke among women a ground-swell of resentment against men, particularly perhaps against the priests and monks who abused their influence to lead them into sin. Perhaps if the women had had more power, there would have been more male

[18] A brief description of the effects of syphilis (with a number of quotations from contemporary sources and references) can be found in my previous article in ENCOUNTER (October 1980), pp. 76–81.

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victims of Witch Hunts, but since all the power lay in men's hands, only they were able to give vent to their desire to find scapegoats. It is possible, nevertheless, that some trials of men—especially of clergymen—were instigated by women. The famous affair of Loudun in France in the middle of the 17th century appears to be an example. As I said earlier, there are ample grounds for rejecting the view that Witch Trials were a consciously employed method of subjugating women. Nevertheless, the extent to which one sex can inflict sufferings on the other must reflect their relative power, even when the motives and actions are irrational and self-damaging. We might, therefore, take the sex ratio of the victims as a rough indication of the imbalance of power between the sexes. It was the sexual nature of the disease that directed the search for scapegoats against women, while during other plagues religious or ethnic minorities suffered. The outbreaks of bubonic plague were regularly followed by massacres of Jews.

THE MORE DEFENCELESS an individual the more likely he or she is to be picked on as a scapegoat. Thus, in the patrilineal and patriarchal tribes of Africa more accusations are levelled against women than against men—which is not the case in the matrilineal tribes. This does not mean that such accusations are a deliberate method of "keeping women down", which would presuppose that the men do not truly believe in witchcraft. In many tribes in Africa and elsewhere, deliberate tricks are employed for keeping the women under control by so-called secret societies—secret not in the sense that their existence or membership is secret but only that they keep secrets. One of these is that they imitate the voice of the spirit with a device known as a bull-roarer. When this spirit wanders about the village all women and girls as well as uninitiated boys must hide, and any of them who peeps out is killed on the spot. Any initiated man who divulged this secret to a woman or an uninitiated boy would also be killed.

The ground for attacks against women when syphilis struck was prepared by the change in the attitude towards them which took place during the two preceding centuries, and which Jean Delumeau calls "demonisation." Although there is no trace of it in the sayings of Jesus Christ, the idea that women are a source of evil has been present in the Christian tradition at least since St Augustine, and formed a part of the cluster of values which extolled chastity and deprecated pleasures of the flesh. This attitude, however, underwent a drastic reinforcement during the 14th and 15th centuries and reached a frenzy during the 16th. The latter change lends force to my thesis but the reinforcement during the 14th and 15th centuries calls for another explanation—which can be found if we look at the tightening-up on celibacy of the clergy and the multiplication of the monastic orders which occurred during that time. The connection between the two trends is perfectly understandable in the light of psychiatry. The more stringent observance of chastity would cause the priests and monks to be more tormented by carnal desire. The aggressive impulses generated by this frustration would be directed at the objects of desire, while the repressed feelings of guilt (for indulging in sinful thoughts or acts) would (through a process of projection) lead to imputation of evil proclivities to all women, above all of wanting to tempt, tease and lead holy men to perdition.[19]

THE ADVANCE of sacerdotal celibacy stretched over a thousand years: from the Synod of 384 which advised the higher ranks of the clergy to remain celibate (without, however, prescribing any punishment for non-compliance) to the Counter-Reformation when celibacy began to be enforced effectively. Important steps were taken by the Synods during the 11th and 12th centuries which prohibited the sons of priests taking over their fathers' offices, and later excluded them altogether from entering the priesthood. Married priests were forbidden to celebrate mass. In 1139 the Lateran Council declared marriages of the higher clergy invalid, and penalised married priests of the lower orders by depriving them of benefices and legal immunities.[20] After the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, through the tireless vigilance of Innocent III, open marriage of priests ceased except in outlying regions where inspection was difficult. This, however, did not mean that chastity was observed. This is what the 19th-century historian Henry C. Lea says on the subject of concubinage:

> "However deplorable such an alternative might be in itself, it was surely preferable to the mischief which the unquenched and ungoverned passions of a pastor might inflict upon his parish; and the instances of this were too numerous and too glaring to admit of much hesitation in electing between the two evils. Even Gerson, the leader of mystic ascetics, who recorded his unbounded admiration for the purity of celibacy in his *Dialogus Naturae et*

[19] Although he created many of them, Freud did not use the concepts employed here to provide an explanation of the Witch Mania when he touched upon this subject. His essay offered an interpretation of a case of possession of a Bohemian gentleman in the 17th century on the basis of personal documents found by Freud's friend. Sigmund Freud, "Eine Teufelsneurose im siebzehnten Jahrundert", *Gesammelte Werken*, Vol. 13, (1950).

[20] See H. E. Feine, *Kirchliche Rechtsgeschichte* (Vienna Bohlaus, 1954).

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Sophiae de Castitate Clericorum, saw and appreciated its practical evils, and had no scruple in recommending concubinage as a preventive, which, though scandalous in itself, might serve to prevent greater scandals. It therefore requires no great stretch of credulity to believe the assertion of Sleidan, that in some of the Swiss Cantons it was the custom to oblige a new pastor, on entering upon his functions, to select a concubine, as a necessary protection to the virtue of his female parishioners, and to the peace of the families entrusted to his spiritual direction. Indeed, we have already seen (p.261), on the authority of Council of Valladolid in 1322, that such a practice was not uncommon in Spain."

Lea goes on to emphasise:

"In thus reviewing the influences which a nominally celibate clergy exercised over those entrusted to their care, it is perhaps scarcely too much to conclude that they were largely responsible for the laxity of morals which is a characteristic of mediaeval society. No one who has attentively examined the records left to us of that society can call in question the extreme prevalence of the licentiousness which everywhere infected it. Christianity had arisen as the great reformer of a world utterly corrupt. How earnestly its reform was directed to correcting sexual immorality is visible in the persistence with which the Apostles condemned and forbade a sin that the Gentiles scarcely regarded as a sin. The early Church was consequently pure, and its very asceticism is a measure of the energy of its protest against the all-pervading licence which surrounded it. Its teachings, as we have seen, remained unchanged. Fornication continued to be a mortal sin, yet the period of its unquestioned domination over the conscience of Europe was the very period in which licence among the Teutonic races was most unchecked. A Church which, though founded on the Gospel, and wielding the illimitable power of the Roman hierarchy, could yet allow the feudal principle to extend to the "*jus primae noctis*" or "*droit de marquette*" and whose ministers in their character of temporal seigneurs could even occasionally claim the disgusting right themselves, was evidently exercising its influence not for good but for evil."[21]

It was not until the 16th century and, finally, at the Council of Trent (1545–1563) that the final curbs were put on concubinage; thenceforth unchastity of priests and monks had to be clandestine, and it appears to have become much rarer. It is usually said that the new strictness was a response to the Protestant challenge. This is on the whole true; but the impact of syphilis must have played an important part in this change. In my previous ENCOUNTER article, I have given reasons for linking the rise of Puritanism as well as for the introduction of a stronger dose of Puritanism, in the wider sense, into the Catholic Church, with the epidemic. Here I should like to add that it must have made the obligation of chastity much easier to enforce because sinners would be likely to be detected by the visible symptoms of the disease.

IT APPEARS, THEREFORE, that the lay clergy began to suffer from serious sexual frustration only in the 16th century. None the less, chastity was becoming more widely practised in earlier times because the three preceding centuries saw the great multiplication of the monastic orders and the tightening up of the discipline on this score within them. Indeed, the monks were the chief helpers of the Popes in their struggle to impose celibacy on the lay clergy. And as for the "demonisation" of women, we must remember that before 1500 nearly all writers and all theologians were monks.

Monks & Celibacy

AN OBJECTION TO the foregoing argument might be raised on the ground that although their clergy were allowed to marry, the Protestants also burned witches. The thesis, however, can be saved by taking into account the following considerations.

The first is that the Catholics burned more witches than the Protestants—perhaps twice or three times as many. Secondly, the demonisation of women had gone very far by the time of the Reformation; and the Protestants inherited this tradition. Thirdly, the Protestant theologians shared with the Catholics the anti-hedonist principles. They abolished celibacy of the clergy not because they approved of indulgence in pleasures but as a way of stopping fornication. The abolition of confessions and absolutions, moreover, made it more difficult to get rid of feelings of guilt. We can plausibly surmise that this factor would tend to foster "projection" and "scapegoating", and would counteract in some measure the contrary effects of the abolition of celibacy. A much stricter enforcement of premarital chastity and marital fidelity—in combination with the puritanical refusal ever to discuss matters pertaining to sexual intercourse—would also tend to generate enough hang-ups to stimulate demonisation of women. Furthermore, the absence of a powerful hierarchy made the Protestant clergy more vulnerable to castigation by their own flock for not living up to what they preached. Thus, any sign of having caught syphilis might bring upon a

[21] Henry C. Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church* (1932), pp. 299–300.

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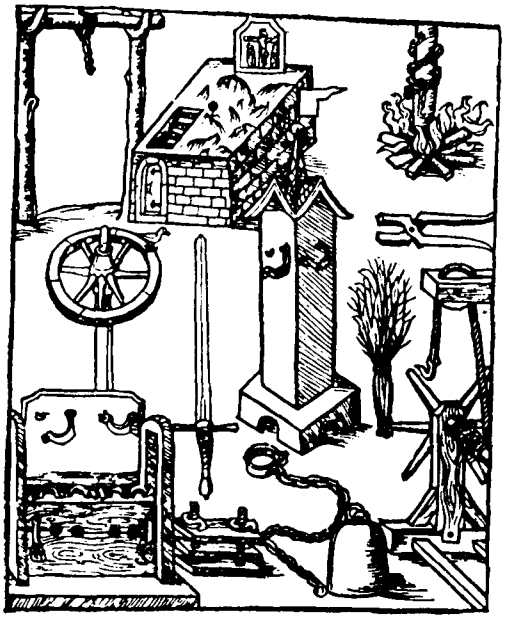
Protestant clergyman an even prompter punishment than in the case of a Catholic. None the less, although John Calvin and other Protestant theologians supported the hunts for witches, the chief theorists of the persecution were all Catholics and nearly all were monks. Monks played a crucial role in nearly all the hunts which took place in the Catholic lands, the Dominicans being particularly prominent.

THE WITCH CRAZE did not spread to the lands of the Orthodox Church: neither Russia nor the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were affected. The ferocious persecution of the Old Believers in Russia was accompanied by no witch hunts—which provides another argument against the view that they were a by-product of a fight against heresies. The schism between the Eastern and Western Churches occurred before the celibacy of the clergy was established; and the Orthodox priests continued to marry. As the schism occurred several centuries before the demonisation of women reached a high pitch in the West, the Eastern Church was not affected by this tradition, in contrast to the Protestant denominations. True, the Orthodox bishops were celibate, but they normally underwent voluntary castration before promotion; an entrant into the priesthood had a choice between ambition and marriage. Being castrated, the higher clergy of the Orthodox Church could not have suffered so much from frustration and guilt as did their Western equivalents. Consequently, there must have been less scope within their minds for the operations of the mechanisms of projection and scapegoating, which underlay the demonisation of women and the Witch Hunt in the West.



Instruments of Torture (Hamburg Witch Trials, 1508)

The same factor explains why the Witch Craze never spread to the lands of Islam, where the mullahs were hardly likely to suffer from severe sexual frustration (they usually had many wives). Furthermore, you cannot demonise women when their position is so low that they are little more than chattels. Cloistered in purdah, covered up by chadors and yashmaks from head to foot, women could hardly be seen as temptresses by polygamous Moslem theologians.

Nor did the Witch Craze infect the Jews, although they were close witnesses of these happenings. Significantly, from the viewpoint of the present thesis, rabbis are not only allowed but are obliged to marry: even a widowed rabbi will not be accepted by his community unless he remarries.

IT IS LIKELY THAT the proportion of priests and monks who were suffering from severe sexual frustration was much greater when entry into their ranks was the only avenue to freedom from want and a respectable status for men of humble origin. Many younger sons of better-off families were forced to take the vows against their will, and only in an ecclesiastic career could a man of intellectual disposition find an opportunity to devote himself to study. When it became possible to attain either of these goals in other walks of life, the entrants would be more self-selected in respect of their tolerance of chastity, that is, a weaker sexual appetite. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that lesser sexual frustration would diminish the inclination to demonise women.[22]

Of Lust & Disease

THE SOURCES bear ample witness to the preoccupation of the Witch Hunters with lust and disease. The Emperor Maximilian I, who, in 1495, declared syphilis to be God's punishment for men's sins, became very worried about depredations caused by witches. In 1508 he sought advice on this matter from Abbot Trithemius, who in that year published a book called *The Enemy of Witchcraft*. There he wrote:

> "It is a repulsive breed, that of the witches, especially the female among them, who, with the help of evil spirits or magic potions, bring to mankind endless harm.... Mostly they make people possessed by demons and let them be tormented by unheard-of pains. . . . Hearken, they even indulge in carnal intercourse with

[22] Gregorio Maranon, *Tres estudios sobre la vida sexual* (Madrid).

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demons. . . . Unfortunately, the number of these witches is very great, and even in the smallest village you can find a witch. . . . People and cattle die through the wickedness of these women and nobody understands that it all comes from witches. Many people suffer most dreadful illnesses and do not know that they are bewitched."

This passage, incidentally, suggests that the theologians were even more inclined than the common folk to attribute disease to witchcraft. Writing seventy years later, Jean Bodin declares:

". . . there are fifty women witches to one man. This happens, in my opinion, not in consequence of the weakness of this sex, because we can see untamable stubbornness in most of them. . . . It would be more correct to say that it is the force of bestial lust which pushes the woman to these extremes in order to assuage her desires or to take revenge. . . ."[23]

Equally eloquent in linking lust and disease with witchcraft is the most influential manual of witch-hunters, *The Hammer of Witches* (*Malleus Maleficarum*) written by two German monks, Jacobus Sprenger and Heinrich Krämer, alias Insistoris.[24] Here are a few quotations:

"All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable, these women satisfy their filthy lusts not only in themselves, but even in the mighty ones of the age, of whatever state and condition; causing by all sorts of witchcraft the death of their souls through the excessive infatuation of carnal love, in such a way that for no shame or persuasion can they desist from such acts."

". . . these wretches furthermore afflict and torment men and women, beasts of burthen, herd-beasts, as well as animals of other kinds, with terrible and piteous pains and sore diseases, both internal and external; they hinder men from performing the sexual act and women from conceiving, whence husbands cannot know their wives nor wives receive their husbands."

". . . when girls have been corrupted, and have been scorned by their lovers after they have immodestly copulated with them in the hope and promise of marriage with them and have found themselves disappointed in all their hopes and everywhere despised, they turn to the help and protection of devils; either for the sake of vengeance by bewitching those lovers or the wives they have married, or for the sake of giving themselves up to every sort of lechery. Alas! experience tells us that there is no number to such girls, and consequently the witches that spring from this class are innumerable."

"Although far more women are witches than men, as was shown in the First Part of the work, yet men are more often bewitched than women. And the reason for this lies in the fact that God allows the devil more power over the venereal act, by which the original sin is handed down, than over the other human actions."

General acceptance of the notion that men are bewitched more often than women might have been helped by the fact that men succumb to syphilitic psychoses more often than women. As might be expected, Sprenger and Krämer took a dim view of the nature of love:

"Philocaption, or inordinate love of one person for another, can be caused in three ways. Sometimes it is due merely to lack of control over the eyes; sometimes to the temptation of devils; sometimes to the spells of necromancers and witches, with the help of devils."

NOT UNLIKE other demonologists, our authors displayed great flights of imagination on the subjects of sexual relations between witches and devils:

". . . our principal subject is the carnal act which Incubi in an assumed body perform with witches: unless perhaps anyone doubts whether modern witches practise such abominable coitus; and whether witches had their origin in this abomination."

"For it was possible for the devils to lie down themselves by the side of the sleeping husbands, during the time when a watch was being kept on the wives, just as if they were sleeping with their husbands."

". . . to return to the question whether witches had their origin in these abominations, we shall say that they originated from some pestilent mutual association with devils, as is clear from our first knowledge of them. But no one can affirm with certainty that they did not increase and multiply by means of these foul practices, although devils commit this deed for the sake not of pleasure but of corruption. And this appears to be the order of the process. A Succubus devil draws the semen from a wicked man; and if he is that man's own particular devil, and does not wish to make himself an Incubus to a witch, he passes that semen on to the devil deputed to a

[23] Quotations in Baschwitz and in Delumeau; the translations are mine.

[24] Jacobus Sprenger and Heinrich Krämer, *Malleus Maleficarum* (London, The Folio Society, 1968), pp. 29, 18–19, 51, 172, 176, 75, 71, 77, 80, 80-81, 45, 76, 177, 83, 87, 90-91, 93, 42, 44, 44.

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woman or witch; and this last, under some constellation that favours his purpose that the man or woman so born should be strong in the practice of witchcraft, becomes the Incubus to the witch."

"Husbands have actually seen Incubus devils swiving with their wives, although they have thought that they were not devils but men. And when they had taken up a weapon and tried to run them through, the devil has suddenly disappeared, making himself invisible. And then their wives have thrown their arms about them, although they have sometimes been hurt, and railed at their husbands, mocking them and asking them if they had eyes, or whether they were possessed of devils."

"... these Incubus devils will not only infest those women who have been generated by means of such abominations, or those who have been offered to them by mid-wives, but that they try with all their might, by means of witches who are bawds or hot whores, to seduce all the devout and chaste maidens in that whole district or town."

"With the exception, therefore, of these three classes of [holy] men, no one is secure from witches. For all others are liable to be bewitched, or to be tempted and incited by some witchery."

"... in times long past the Incubus devils used to infest women against their wills. But the theory that modern witches are tainted with this sort of diabolic filthiness is not substantiated only in our opinion, since the expert testimony of the witches themselves, has made all these things credible; and that they do not now, as in times past, subject themselves unwillingly, but willingly embrace this most foul and miserable servitude."

The authors blame the evils of the world on women, remarking plaintively:

"... for this age is dominated by women ... and when the world is now full of adultery, especially among the most highly born; when all this is considered, I say, of what use is it to speak of remedies to those who desire no remedy?"

AS FOR THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES, they lend particularly strong support to my thesis because all the effects of witchcraft listed by the authors fall under the headings of disturbances of the reproductive functions, other related illnesses and insanity!

"... apart from the methods by which they injure other creatures, they have six ways of injuring humanity. And one is, to induce an evil love in a man for a woman, or in a woman for a man. The second is to plant hatred or jealousy in anyone. The third is to bewitch them so that a man cannot perform the genital act with a woman, or conversely a woman with a man; or by various means to procure an abortion, as has been said before. The fourth is to cause some disease in any of the human organs. The fifth, to take away life. The sixth, to deprive them of reason."

"How witches impede and prevent the power of procreation ... when they directly prevent the erection of the member which is accommodated to fructification. And this need not seem impossible, when it is considered that they are able to vitiate the natural use of any member. Secondly, when they prevent the flow of the vital essences to the members in which resides the motive force, closing up the seminal ducts so that it does not reach the generative vessels, or so that it cannot be ejaculated, or is fruitlessly spilled."

"How, as it were, they deprive man of his virile member.... A similar experience is narrated by a certain venerable Father from the Dominican House of Spires, well known in the Order for the honesty of his life and for his learning. 'One day', he says, 'while I was hearing confessions, a young man came to me and, in the course of his confession, woefully said that he had lost his member. Being astonished at this, and not being willing to give it easy credence, since in the opinion of the wise it is a mark of lightheartedness to believe too easily, I obtained proof of it when I saw nothing on the young man's removing his clothes and showing the place. Then, using the wisest counsel I could, I asked whether he suspected anyone of having so bewitched him. And the young man said that he did suspect someone, but that she was absent and living in Worms. Then I said: I advise you to go to her as soon as possible and try your utmost to soften her with gentle words and promises, and he did so. For he came back after a few days and thanked me, saying that he was whole and had recovered everything. And I believed his words, but again proved them by the evidence of my eyes.' "

Nor was the evidence for a misogynist persecution mania un-recorded:

"... witches who in this way sometimes collect male organs in great numbers, as many as twenty or thirty members together, and put them in a bird's nest, or shut them up in a box, where they move themselves like living members."

"In Ratisbon, a man was being tempted by the devil in the form of a woman to copulate, and became greatly disturbed when the devil would

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not desist. But it came into the poor man's mind that he ought to defend himself by taking Blessed Salt, as he had heard in a sermon. So he took some Blessed Salt on entering the bath-room; and the woman looked fiercely at him and cursing whatever devil had taught him to do this, suddenly disappeared. For the devil can, with God's permission, present himself either in the form of a witch, or by possessing the body of an actual witch. . . .

. . . some are protected against all sorts of witchcrafts, so that they can be hurt in no way; and others are particularly rendered chaste by the good Angels with regard to the generative function."

"Similarly, St Gregory, in the first book of his *Dialogues*, tells of the Blessed Abbot Equitius. This man, he says, was in his youth greatly troubled by the provocation of the flesh; but the very distress of his temptation made him all the more zealous in his application to prayer. And when he continuously prayed Almighty God for a remedy against this affliction, an Angel appeared to him one night and seemed to make him a eunuch, and it seemed to him in his vision that all feeling was taken away from his genital organs; and from that time he was such a stranger to temptation as if he had no sex in his body."

My final quotation reveals the authors' hankering after a release from the torments of sexual frustration through castration (as was permitted in the Eastern Church):

"Again, in the *Lives of the Fathers* collected by that very holy man St Heraclides, in the book which he calls *Paradise*, he tells of a certain holy Father, a monk named Helias. This man was moved by pity to collect thirty women in a monastery, and began to rule over them. But after two years, when he was thirty years old, he fled from the temptation of the flesh into a hermitage, and fasting there for two days, prayed to God, saying: 'O Lord God, either slay me, or deliver me from this temptation.' And in the evening a dream came to him, and he saw three Angels approach him; they asked him why he had fled from that Monastery of virgins. But when he did not dare to answer, for shame, the Angels said: If you are set free from temptation, will you return to your cure of those women? And he answered that he would willingly. They then exacted an oath to that effect from him, and made him a eunuch. For one seemed to hold his hands, another his feet, and the third cut out his testicles with a knife; though this was not really so, but only seemed to be. And when they asked if he felt himself remedied, he answered that he was entirely delivered. So, on the fifth day, he returned to the sorrowing women and ruled over them for the forty years that he continued to live, and never again felt a spark of that first temptation.

"No less a benefit do we read to have been conferred upon the Blessed Thomas, a Doctor of our Order, whom his brothers imprisoned for entering that Order; and, wishing to tempt him, they sent him a seductive and sumptuously adorned harlot. But when the Doctor had looked at her, he ran to the material fire, and snatching up a lighted torch, drove the engine of the fire of lust out of his prison; and, prostrating himself in a prayer for the gift of chastity, went to sleep. Two Angels then appeared to him, saying: Behold, at the bidding of God we gird you with a girdle of chastity, which cannot be loosed by any other such temptation; neither can it be acquired by the merits of human virtue, but it is given as a gift by God alone. And he felt himself girded, and was aware of the touch of the girdle, and cried out and awaked. And thereafter he felt himself endowed with so great a gift of chastity, that from that time he abhorred all the delights of the flesh, so that he could not even speak to a woman except under compulsion, but was strong in his perfect chastity."

THE DATE OF PUBLICATION of *Malleus* (1486), which was several years before the panic about syphilis spread, might be seen as an argument against linking Witch Hunting with the epidemic. I do not believe that this is so. At any particular time there are a number of eccentrics who attempt to propagate all kinds of out-of-the-way opinions. Although even what can be conceived by deviants is broadly limited by the culture in which they live, the narrower determination of beliefs by general circumstances occurs mainly on the level of selection through which some notions are given wide currency while others are consigned to insignificance or oblivion. The arrival of syphilis coincided with a radical change in the reception of *Malleus*. The first printing in 1486 was opposed by the clergy and was carried out with the help of a forged letter of approval. When Sprenger died in 1495 in Cologne he was buried without a mass. Krämer was expelled from more than one place by the local ecclesiastical authorities; he was suspended, and rehabilitated only in 1495 which happened to be the same year in which Emperor Maximilian bewailed the arrival of the new disease. Krämer was given a Papal commission in 1500 and died as an inquisitor in 1505. Their book was reissued 16 times in Germany, 11 times in France, and twice in Italy. It had six editions in England between 1584 and 1669.

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In a book published in 1560 Pierre Boaistuau[25] records this attribution of physical deformities to sexual misdemeanours:

> "It is certain that most often these monstrous creatures come from God's judgment, justice, punishment and curse, which permit that fathers and mothers produce such monstrosities through their horrible sins, as they rush indiscriminately like stupid beasts wherever their lust leads them without regard to time or place or other laws ordained by nature."

In a few cases I have come across—and I am confident that many more could be found by specialists who examined the sources from this angle—the reference to venereal disease is pretty obvious. Soldan, Heppe and Bauer, for example, report a trial of a prior's housekeeper who was accused by two priests of having caused through witchcraft their "illness in the most secret parts of the body. . . ."

It seems odd that the modern historians prate about economic and political bases when the treatises of witch-finders hardly refer to such matters but are full of pronouncements about lust, copulation, and disease. The monastic theologians displayed vivid imagination on the subject of witches and devils' sexual activities or the torments which lascivious people will suffer in hell. One of the favourite themes was how sinful women are punished on the organs used for sinning. A good deal of attention was given to the large size of the devil's penis, the swiftness with which he can alternate between intromission and cunnilinctus, or the witches' manner of kissing him on the anus.

An explanation of a pattern of behaviour may refer to circumstances unknown to the doers, but it ought at the same time to account for what they keep on saying: in this case why the writers who provided the justification of witch-hunting went on and on about sexual intercourse and disease, and why they advocated remedies involving prurient sadism. All this becomes easy to understand in the light of a psychoanalytic interpretation of the consequences of celibacy and syphilis.

SYPHILIS must have also stimulated witchcraft accusations in another way. It made them useful as a quite rational method of disavowing sin, and disclaiming responsibility for the visible sinful symptoms which could be attributed to being bewitched instead of having engaged in illicit copulation.

Nevertheless, the tone of the writings clearly suggests that the fear was genuine. It would be a fatuous error to imagine that witch-hunts were some kind of "psycho therapy" designed to alleviate guilt feelings. On the contrary, it is reasonable to suppose that taking part in the gruesome proceedings might have prompted additional feelings of guilt which would be repressed from consciousness, and through still more projection provide a further stimulus to ferocity.

The Witch Mania must also have been stimulated by the impact of the psychoses caused by syphilis: general paresis or *dementia paralytica*, tabes, and cerebral syphilis. Here are a few quotations from a well known modern textbook of psychiatry (1950):[26]

> "*Dementia paralytica* may be defined as an organic disease of the brain, of an inflammatory and degenerative nature, manifesting itself in progressive mental deterioration, and accompanied by certain definite physical signs. . . .
>
> The disease is world-wide, although it is less common in tropical countries. . . . *Dementia paralytica* usually manifests itself at any time from five to twenty years after infection. . . . The average rate at which the disease develops varies between 30 and 50 years, but cases below 30 and above 50 are relatively infrequent. Males are more often affected than females, in the proportion of four to one, but this variation does not occur in cases of juvenile general paralysis, where the sexes seem to be equally affected. . . . Remissions may occur at any time during the course of the disease, which may come even to an apparent standstill. . . .
>
> . . . The disease is commonly insidious in its development, and is characterised by episodes of strange behaviour, not at all in harmony with the previous character of the individual. . . . All the aesthetic feelings become lost. The relatives and friends cannot understand the alteration in the patient's personality, but feel that he is utterly different from what he formerly was. . . . During the progress of the disease the memory is progressively impaired, not only of recent events, but more remote ones. . . . There is disorientation, particularly for time. . . .
>
> Grandiose delusions, which are in this disease of a bizarre type, are not so common as has been generally supposed. Indeed, in some cases, instead of a feeling of well-being and euphoria, a state of intense depression is present, even amounting to stupor with mutism. The feature of the depression is the frequency with which absurd nihilistic ideas are expressed. Patients claim that they are dead, that their blood has ceased to circulate, that they have no pulse, that their bodies are utterly destroyed. The ideas of the depressive type are as fantastic and

[25] As quoted by Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident*, p. 289; the translation is mine.

[26] D. Henderson and R. D. Gillespie, *A Textbook of Psychiatry for Students and Practitioners* (Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. 466–9, 464–5, 493–5, 497.

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grotesque as those of the grandiose variety. . . .
. . . any type of mental picture may appear—cases, for instance, in which hallucinations are prominent, cases showing alternating elation and depression and cases in whom persecutory delusions are in the forefront . . . the first evidence of a general paralytic process may be the occurrence of a convulsive seizure, but more usually these seizures occur during the course of the disease."

ONE CAN WELL IMAGINE how people showing the derangements described above would be seen as "possessed", or "bewitched", or having relations with the devil, particularly as nothing was known about the causation. On the latter point, Henderson and Gillespie say:

"During the past century this disease has been investigated from many different aspects, and its identity has been well established on clinical, pathological and serological grounds. For many years it has been recognised that many of those who ultimately suffered from this disease had at one time contracted a syphilitic infection, but there were many competent observers who stated that the condition could occur quite independently of any syphilitic infection—for instance from head injury, alcoholism or an erratic mode of life. The theory of the syphilitic causation of this disease was at first based entirely on statistics, but after Krafft-Ebing had had the temerity to inoculate general paralytics with syphilitic virus without infecting them, the conception of the syphilitic origin of the disease was greatly strengthened. This theory soon received further support from a series of researches on the cerebro-spinal fluid, originated by Widal and Sicard, and carried on by many others until Wassermann demonstrated antibodies in the cerebro-spinal fluid and blood serum of those known to be suffering from syphilitic disease affecting the nervous system.

In 1913 Noguchi and Moore announced that in 14 out of 70 cases of general paralysis they had been able to demonstrate the *Treponema pallidum* in the brain cortex. These findings have been confirmed by many other observers. It can thus be definitively stated: 'No syphilis, no paresis.' While this is so, it does not necessarily mean that syphilis invariably leads to an affection of the nervous system; it has been estimated that approximately only 2% of syphilitics ever develop general paralysis. Why it develops in one case and not in another has been constantly discussed, but we still do not know whether it is a matter of a special strain of the organism or of a specially susceptible nervous system."

The lack of regularity in the development of the disease would facilitate attributions to occult forces. The same applies to cerebral syphilis. According to Henderson and Gillespie:

"In the early stages of his illness the patient may complain of a certain nervous uneasiness, may feel dull, changed, mixed up in the head and complain of difficulty in thinking. The emotional condition is variable; at one time the patient is excited, irritable and resistive, while at another time he may be depressed, anxious and easily frightened. . . . The delirium which sets in is of the usual kind. It is a hallucinatory state with fear, and with great difficulty in comprehension and in attention. The patient is imperfectly oriented for time and place. . . . It is estimated that in the absence of head injury, upwards of 90% of all cases of ocular palsy in adults are caused by syphilis or by brain tumour."

TABES WAS LIKELY to prompt accusations, as can be seen from the following quotation:

"A certain number of patients with *tabes dorsalis* develop general paralysis at a later date; but mental symptoms of other kinds may also develop in tabetics who show neither the physical nor the mental symptoms of general paralysis. The commonest non-paralytical syndromes appearing in tabetics are, according to Otto Meyer, chronic hallucinatory paranoid states, depressive psychoses, circular psychoses, acute hallucinatory confusion, hallucinatory anxious states and various types of dementia. Kraepelin believes that there is a psychosis which is commoner than any other in tabes, and which has a course, symptomatology and outcome distinct from general paralysis. This psychosis consists in an acute hallucinatory excitement. The patient suddenly becomes fearful, agitated, hears distinct voices and is accused of numerous crimes. The onset is sudden and later in life and often at a later stage in the course of tabes than general paralysis is accustomed to appear. Memory, retention and orientation remain intact, and speech and writing do not present the specific disturbances seen in cases of general paralysis. The symptoms may subside in a few months, or remain indefinitely."

GIVEN THE IGNORANCE of the causes, coupled with the unquestioned belief that Witchcraft can cause disease and possession, it would be strange if a spectacular eruption of the derangements described above did not foster the notion that witches were proliferating and intensifying their nefarious activities.

Moreover, these diseases multiplied the number

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of people whose strange behaviour aroused suspicions, as well as the number of paranoiacs eager to issue accusations. The ratio of male to female sufferers from these psychoses is 4-to-1, according to Henderson and Gillespie, which would fuel the tendency to demonise women. It may not be a coincidence that this is a rough converse of the sex ratio among the victims of the trials, as estimated by Delumeau. Persecutory hallucinations, caused by syphilitic psychoses, may have prompted much of the preaching and theorising about Witches and Satan. (This might have been the case with Jean Bodin.)

Although neurotic difficulties connected with his celibacy might have had something to do with it, Sir Isaac Newton's acceptance of the current beliefs about witches might be explained as due to the intensity of his preoccupation with mathematical theories; this did not leave him enough mental energy for a critical examination of matters unrelated to his studies, so that his writings about witches were a kind of self-indulgence. In contrast, Jean Bodin (1530–96) was perhaps the greatest innovator in the study of society between Macchiavelli and Montesquieu; he was not generally inclined to receive uncritically the current opinions about human behaviour, and was well acquainted with good arguments to the contrary. Indeed, one of his two works on Witchcraft was a polemic against Johannes Weyer—a brave author who criticised the current beliefs about witches on good grounds of commonsense logic. What is even more incongruous, Bodin wrote a work called *Heptaplomeres*, which he kept hidden during his life and which was only published in 1914; there he advocates the equality of religions before the law and appears to be an agnostic. Yet at the age of 48 he wrote his bloodthirsty treatise on witches; after that he wrote only a book on nature which is regarded by later commentators as showing a conspicuous decline of his mental powers.

Devil and Witch (1493)

Bodin writes about witches making men impotent. The treatise was printed two years after his marriage at 46. (Of his three children, one died early, another was mentally defective, and the third insane.) According to some of his biographers he remained a bachelor until then, including his years at the licentious French court, while others say that he was a defrocked Carmelite monk who had earlier married and divorced a woman of ill repute. In either case he had a good chance of contracting syphilis. The difference in quality between his earlier and later works indicates a deterioration of the brain which cannot be attributed to normal senility as he died at the age of 66. The man who adumbrated the quantity theory of money and who could see (contrary to the universally held belief) that gold does not constitute real wealth, would not accept the plain logic of Weyer's arguments; e.g., that if the powerful witches could manage to do all the things attributed to them, then surely they would also be able to escape from prison or avoid arrest. Bodin's fulminations also show the common feature of neurotic and psychotic obsessions; namely, the exclusion of any possibility of a refutation by the facts. He insists that evidence which in other matters would be sufficient for a verdict of "not guilty", must not be accepted in witch trials. His views on this matter were generally followed.

BY TAKING INTO consideration the medical factor one can also explain why the Witch Craze affected Spain and Italy less than the countries to the north, and southern Italy less than northern. In 1917 J. Wagner-Jauregg (in Vienna) began to treat patients by infecting them with malaria, and until the discovery of penicillin this was the only effective cure for syphilis. Naturally-acquired malaria has the same effect. Henderson and Gillespie report that syphilitic psychoses are rare in the tropics; nowadays malaria is rare outside tropical zones. In the earlier centuries, however, it was common in the southern parts of Europe. Consequently, the impact of syphilis could not have had there the same devastating force which it had further north. In addition to the cultural factors mentioned earlier, malaria may also have impeded the spread of the Witch Craze to the Balkans.

It remains to be added that, owing to the unfreedom of women, the ruling élites of the Islamic states should not have suffered from syphilis as much as their Christian equivalents. All

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important Moslem men had harems, guarded by eunuchs, containing women recruited as virgins and well-inspected beforehand. Such men had little incentive for adultery or brothel-crawling, and their wives and concubines had no opportunities for straying. Consequently, the Moslem magnates were unlikely to catch venereal disease, which was rife among the nobility and royalty of Europe, actually caused the dying out of a number of dynasties, and must have contributed to the bizarre behaviour of monarchs like Henry VIII and Ivan the Terrible.

IN CONTRAST TO the historical processes invoked in other explanations, the epidemic of syphilis shows a perfect chronological correspondence with the Witch Craze. Trials, which were sporadic during the preceding centuries, multiplied enormously after 1500 and at the same time the sex ratio among the victims swung drastically against women. The epidemic of syphilis struck a few years earlier. Witch-hunting petered out gradually and at different times in various parts of Europe during the second half of the 17th century, and ceased altogether during the 18th. This was also the time when syphilis began to assume somewhat milder forms. According to W. H. McNeill's study of plagues:[27]

> "By the end of the [16th] century, syphilis began to recede. The more fulminant forms of infection were dying out, as the normal sorts of adjustment between host and parasite asserted themselves, i.e. as milder strains of the spirochete displaced those that killed off their hosts too rapidly, and as the resistance of European populations to the organism increased."

As the historian of medicine Charles Singer says, considerable progress was made around 1700 in the treatment:[28]

> "Its treatment by mercury had been practised at least as early as the fifteenth century, perhaps as an inheritance from the Arabic-speaking physicians. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries various other remedies were tried; much quackery arose around them. In the eighteenth century the accumulated experience of generations returned again to mercury. Satisfactory methods of administration were evolved and the treatment became standardized. It hardly changed until the twentieth century."

Development of the disease became as a rule slower, and its most vivid manifestations (like the rotting away of the flesh) came later and more rarely.

THE MEDICAL INTERPRETATION accounts also for some other coincidences noted by historians, which up till now have appeared completely mysterious. In his studies of the persecutions in Germany, H. C. Erik Midelfort[29] maintains that the regions where these were the most severe were distinguished by an unusually high ratio of single women. This connection becomes explicable when we bear in mind that such a ratio would encourage fornication and, therefore, increase contagion and panic. We can also account for the numerous instances of witch hunts following in the wake of military campaigns—which led many historians as we saw earlier to follow a wrong track in the search for an explanation. The link is clear: soldiers have always been the most effective spreaders of venereal disease, particularly in the epoch when they regarded rape as their natural right. The special victimisation of midwives, noted in most histories of the persecutions, also ceases to be inexplicable: during the epidemic the number of stillbirths, infantile deaths, and children born with deformations must have increased dramatically; and midwives would be the obvious scapegoats.

It is possible that some of the witches execrated as "ugly" were syphilitic; some might have been in fact agents of contagion. Nor should we assume that all the women described as "old" must have been sexually inactive; in those days every woman over thirty would be called old. Among the tormentors' prurient sadistic enjoyments was the practice of poking the victims with their fingers all over the naked body in search of insensitive spots which were regarded as a proof of being a witch. As syphilitics do, in fact, develop insensitive spots, this practice constitutes another pointer to the connection between the persecutions and the disease.

It is also possible that some of the accused were retired prostitutes. It would, however, be a gross error to imagine that the Witch Hunts might have been some rational method of extirpating the carriers of the disease. Once the fear and hatred of women became widespread, the choice of scapegoats would become quite random or determined by circumstances which had nothing to do with the danger of contagion. After the outbreaks of bubonic plague or cholera, we know that the mobs did not pick on soldiers but on Jews, or Gypsies, or some other defenceless minority.

Apart from accounting for the already mentioned characteristics of the craze, my thesis—unlike other interpretations—also explains its classless character as well as the intellectual current which accompanied the persecutions. If the craze was a mere parish-pump affair (as Thomas and Macfarlane try to tell us), why did prestigious

[27] W. H. McNeill, *Plagues and People* (1976), p. 220.
[28] Charles Singer, *A Short History of Medicine* (Clarendon Press, 1928), p. 162.
[29] H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany, 1562–1684* (Stanford, 1972).

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authorities (including King James I) write books calling for general persecutions? On the other hand, if it was a clearly repressive action against the common folk organised by the ruling class (as Favret and, to some extent, Mandrou see it), then why did so many ordinary people launch the accusations, ask the authorities for help in finding witches, and even proceed to lynch the suspects? If it was a by-product of the functioning of the Church's repressive machinery, then why did so many authors write about witches? And why did their books find so many buyers, even when the authors were Catholic and the readers were Protestant? There is no way in which the demand for the English editions of the *Malleus* in the 17th century could be explained by the momentum of the Papal Inquisition. Such an explanation would not be valid even for a Catholic land. In modern totalitarian states, writings of the rulers and their propagandists can be distributed in large numbers to bookshops and libraries although not a soul wants to buy or read them. In the 16th and the 17th centuries, however, printing and bookselling was a small business wholly dependent on private buyers. The literature therefore provides a reliable indication of the state of mind of the literate classes.

IN MY PREVIOUS ENCOUNTER ARTICLE, I have tried to show that the impact of syphilis played a crucial role in the rise of Puritanism as well as in the "purification" of the Catholic Church. The influence on the Lutheran and the Anglican Churches must have been similar.

One could also look at puritanism as an adaptive reaction which permitted the preservation of healthy genetic lines and the growth of population despite the disease. People of stern morals, who avoided fornication and adultery and who chose as spouses persons of similar conduct, had a much better chance of a long life and of producing a large and healthy progeny, whereas libertines died young and left a few sickly descendants. Owing to the pressure of the population upon resources, and the high death rate among the physically or financially weak—aggravated below the upper classes by a vicious circle of poverty and debility—the lines contaminated by syphilis were constantly eliminated and replaced by the offspring of families with stern sexual morals. Thus, there was a biological selection for puritanism. As morals among the upper classes were laxer than among the lower, the degeneration and dying out of noble families must have fostered an upward social mobility which facilitated Europe's cultural innovation.

My thesis, like a weather map, can account only for broad trends and conditions, and leaves out of consideration the local variations which may have been due to chance factors such as the character of individuals in crucial social or political positions. Still, detailed research into primary sources from the proffered viewpoint might also reveal closer covariation between the epidemic and the intensity of persecutions, and thus account for local differences.

As it stands, my thesis explains the following features of the great Witch Craze which up till now have appeared as inexplicable: (*1*) its duration; (*2*) the geographical extension; (*3*) its generality and classlessness; (*4*) its bias against women; (*5*) its contrariety to the direction of the intellectual progress occurring at the time; (*6*) its bias against midwives; (*7*) its loose association with wars; (*8*) the prominent role of monks and Puritans in the hounding and the greater ferocity of the former. I hope that the foregoing comparative analysis will stimulate research into primary sources which will throw more light on the interplay of the factors surveyed here.

Let me recapitulate. The underlying permanent condition was the prevalence of the belief that Witchcraft works and can cause disease. One of the preparatory conditions was the existence of the machinery of repression forged against heretics by the Church. The second preparatory condition was the demonisation of women, which was an exacerbation of an old ingredient of the Christian tradition, and a consequence of the tightening up of celibacy. The precipitating factor was the arrival of syphilis at the beginning of the 16th century which evoked panic and a search for scapegoats, chosen with preference for the most defenceless members of the subjugated sex. A host of inexplicable psychoses and congenital malformations provided an additional stimulus for Witch Hunts. During the closing decades of the 17th century, and to an even greater extent during the early part of the 18th, there was an abatement of the severity of the disease. This, together with the growing influence of a more advanced body of scientific knowledge and the decline of the influence of celibate clergy, led to the disappearance of the mania among Europe's educated classes, which brought the trials to an historic end.

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Hyam Maccoby

George Steiner's "Hitler"

Of Theology & Politics

THE ADAPTATION for the stage of George Steiner's novella, *The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.*,* has stimulated a raging controversy over the aesthetic and moral propriety of the climax of both novella and play: the long speech of self-justification given to Adolf Hitler. Many spectators have evidently left the Mermaid Theatre in a state of baffled rage. Why has A.H. been given such an apparently plausible case? Why are his Jewish captors given nothing at all to say in reply, and why does the beautiful and silent savage, Teku, the symbol of the innocence of Eden, bring the tale to a close by bowing in reverence before the aged *Führer*? One thing is surely clear: there can be no doubt about George Steiner's credentials as an impassioned opponent of Hitler. His horror at the Nazi massacre of the Jews has coloured his whole output as a writer; and it may even be not too much to say that meditation about the Holocaust has provided the basis of his philosophy. What, then, has gone awry?

The device of giving the villain of a play a plausible speech of self-justification has, of course, a long history. In Shakespeare's plays, for example, one could think of the self-justificatory speeches of Richard III, Iago, Edmund: even Shylock's speech, "Hath not a Jew eyes? . . ." Such a peroration may function on several different levels. On the lowest. it may be simply a display of fire-works on the part of the author: an exhibition of cleverness saying, "Look how dexterously I can argue that black is white." The audience may be dazzled, but scarcely disturbed. Or the cleverness may be attributed to the villain rather than to the author; his display of ingenuity gives him a more interesting theatrical status. On a somewhat deeper level, the villain may be regarded as an *advocatus diaboli*, i.e. as putting forward objections that need to be answered if the true cause of the hero is to appear in its full splendour. The *advocatus diaboli*, in the Catholic tradition, has the assignment of trying to find loopholes in the official case for canonising a new saint; the fact that the candidate has survived such an assault makes his ultimate canonisation all the more authoritative. In Judaism, there is the similar requirement that a member of the Sanhedrin should be able to "prove that the corpse of a creeping thing is ritually clean", i.e. to put up convincing arguments for an apparently hopeless case. The purpose of such dialectical ability is to ensure that grave decisions are based on something more than shallow or conventional premises.

Finally, on a deeper level still, the villain's apologia may be intended to question, in some measure, the values and categories that inform the work as a whole. The audience begins to wonder uneasily whether there isn't, after all, something to be said for the sinister fellow's point of view. Shakespeare was a past master of this momentary shifting and blurring of the moral focus, manipulating ambiguities not only through villainous figures but also through jesters, clowns, and "melancholy men." Suddenly we see all the respectable members of the cast as *poseurs*, disguising their true motives (even from themselves) with concepts of virtue and honour, and the villain, or clown, emerging as the only honest spokesman. When the normal focus reasserts itself, the glimpse into a void of scepticism about the moral basis of society is forgotten.

Thus, it could be George Steiner's intention to elevate this kind of Shakespearean discordancy into the central mode of his work, but by preventing the comforting return of the familiar, leaving us at the end staring into the void. If so, then Steiner is changing what is in Shakespeare a peripheral, corrective device into a central strategy on behalf of a philosophy of society which is passionately pessimistic and deeply depressed. For in his meditation on the Nazi death-camps, Steiner has apparently come to the conclusion that they were a disease of civilisation itself. They were not a relapse into barbarism or into animal beastliness, for nothing in animal or savage life could approach them in horror. Civilisation itself is the culprit—and the basis of civilisation is the Word. Without the gift of language, man could not have separated himself from the mute world of the animals. In language, therefore, lies the possibility of both good and evil, of creation and destruction.

Steiner, the accomplished linguist, the scholarly semanticist, the connoisseur of literary styles, sees

**The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.* By GEORGE STEINER. Faber, £2.95; Simon & Schuster, $13.50.*

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in language the prime cause of man's inevitable destruction and defeat. Hitler's Holocaust of the Jews was not the attempt at a truly final solution; it is only the precursor of a holocaust of the whole human race, after which the primeval silence of the jungle will again take over. In *Bluebeard's Castle* (1971) George Steiner considered annihilation to be the probable result of man's quest for knowledge, but in the end he decided, with a certain relieved exhilaration, that the quest must still go on. In *Portage*, Steiner portrays A.H. as the master of the sinister side of language, the eloquence of evil, spouting arguments that are unanswerable because in them civilisation sees its own dark mirror-image. I found it revealing that in *Bluebeard's Castle* Steiner hailed H. G. Wells as the true prophet of modern times: the liberal who abandoned his earlier progressive faith in education as the solution to the evil in humanity, and came to the despairing conclusion that education itself contained the seeds of catastrophe.

ACCORDINGLY, Steiner's novella (and Christopher Hampton's play based on it) is pervaded with a mystical dualism that sees good as inextricably intertwined with evil. God and the Devil are closely akin, as are Adolf Hitler and his Jewish opposite number, Lieber, who is in charge of the mission to bring the *Führer*, at long last, to justice. Lieber indeed, sitting in the theatre high above the action of the play and intoning the crimes for which Hitler is being sought, may be taken to be a symbol of God; Hitler, with his superhuman strength of body and mind (still alive and well in the South American jungle at 92), is the incarnation of the Devil.

Strangely enough, Lieber would seem to carry strong intimations of the author himself, an identification uncannily suggested by the English actor playing the part of Lieber with his, perhaps playful, imitation of Steiner's accent and mannerisms. The creative power of the artist seems to give him the position of God/Devil, combining good and evil, and thus absolving him from normal moral responsibilities. The Jewish character Elie, the Rabbi (who represents the Jewish religious tradition), introduces from time to time remarks in intended kabbalistic style, showing the intimate relationship between good and evil. The Torah is supposed to contain a phrase that is the root of evil; both good and evil are said to stem from the Messianic dance of King David; the creative Word of God by which the world was created is held to be matched by a word of evil by which it will be destroyed. These are, of course, inventions, and actually show, if anything, Steiner's lack of real attunement to the classical sources of Jewish religious thought, for these comprise a sustained attempt to withstand such dualism, as a perennial temptation and the root of all idolatry.[1]

THE IDEA that Hitler was of "Jewish blood" is introduced, surely not for any factual reasons but presumably because of its frightening mythical force. That the Jews produced their own destroyer, and that his gift of eloquence should have arisen out of the Jewish fascination with the Word is not unconnected with Steiner's thesis that civilisation is the progenitor of perversion. A.H.'s own claim that he is the Black Messiah who brought about the Zionist Jewish state is, again, an expression of the undercurrents that flow between destruction and construction. Here they are so inextricably mixed that A.H. boasts that he has conveyed to the Jews some of his own ruthlessness, for without Hitler-like fanaticism they could not have constructed the state of Israel.

The whole drift of the work is that no dividing-line can be drawn between good and evil; they nourish each other and are mutually fructifying. The world cannot do without the Devil, for he is the principle of energy. There is even the notion that civilisation is anti-life, while evil is pro-life, for it works continually towards the destruction of the Word, and therefore towards the restoration of the primeval silence. Is this perhaps why the savage, Teku,[2] responds so positively to the destructive energy that he senses in Hitler?

Here, then, is a medley of ideas issuing from one basic thought: that good and evil cannot be radically separated, since they imply each other and are of equal cosmic validity; in silence, they are

[1] It is hard for me to decide whether certain inaccuracies in the recondite historical and theological references are intentional or not. For example, Hitler says that God, according to the Bible, punishes unto "thirty generations." The actual text (*Deuteronomy 5: 9–10*) says: ". . . unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto a thousand generations of them that love me." Another passage in Hitler's speech inaccurately refers to the "72 secret just ones": the correct number is 36. In the recital of atrocities, the Jewish speaker makes the repeated interjection "*Hagadio*." Is this intended to be *had gadia*, "one kid", the title-phrase of the closing song of the Passover Seder service? If so, perhaps the "one kid" is here being regarded as symbolic of martyred Israel; but even so, its use as a sorrowful interjection hardly seems appropriate. At one point "Rabbi Judah ben Levi" (an invented name) is mentioned as having received the Torah from God by dictation. Steiner presumably knows that the Torah means the Five Books of Moses, who alone is credited with having received them. There seems little political point or theological sense in attributing the giving of the Torah to later Rabbinical times.

[2] A curious name, and perhaps a Steineresque clue. In the Talmud, the word *teyku* signifies "Let it stand", i.e. "No more can be said on this problem, which is insoluble. . . ." Some Hebrew mystics used the expression to signify the silence beyond speech. I wonder if it is appropriate for the silence *before* speech, i.e. that of the savage, who doesn't "understand the words."

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undifferentiated and unborn, but with the advent of the Word, they come to life in a twin birth.[3] How does this intrude dramatically? This depends on the attitude we take towards Hitler's first and final speech.

IF WE respond to it by an indignant recital of its outrageous fallacies and misrepresentations, we are falling into a kind of theatrical trap set for us by the author. For after all, this speech is supposed to be the eloquence of evil. We should expect it, therefore, to be a cunning mixture of truth, half-truth, and falsehood. To treat it as in any way representing the opinions of Steiner himself is to be convicted of naivety and worse. More than that, we would be breaking into the silence that is intended to follow Hitler's speech: the helicopters have gathered to wipe out both A.H. and his captors. In the jungle, silence will return. In the outside world, the babble of insincere voices can continue, and the voice of naked evil, Hitler's eloquence, can be conveniently forgotten, together with the voices of his captors who sought to remind an unfeeling world of its complicity in Hitler's evil.

But this trap set us by Steiner is, in my view, clearly an unfair one. For though Hitler's speech is intended dramatically to be the last explosion of the dark Word followed by destruction and silence, this is a dramatic aim that is quite beyond realisation. Hitler's speech consists of words and arguments, and it is quite impossible for any audience to suppress its inclination to consider, refute, or even assent to those arguments, and attend only to the words as a kind of black music, as the savage Teku does ("Teku had not understood the words, only their meaning. Whose brazen pulse carried all before it.").

Some reviewers have taken the well-meaning attitude that Hitler's 25-minute closing speech is simply intended to provoke us into thinking. On this view, the last word in the script should be; DISCUSS. I would not want to ascribe to Professor Steiner such a banal pedagogical aim—as if the whole play were a "visual aid" intended to "stimulate" an audience full of Steiner's somewhat sluggish pupils into "thinking for yourselves." Steiner, indeed, has a deserved reputation as a stimulating teacher; but it is not in this role that he now comes before us, but as an artist, and it is his art and artistry that we must judge. We are bound to conclude that he has aimed at a stunning near-apocalyptic effect, and it has entirely failed to come off; or in so far as it is striking, influential and effective, it is the opposite to what was intended. No one in the Mermaid Theatre audience appeared to be stunned into an awed and profound silence; on all sides the spectators departed discussing heatedly the little rights and wrongs of Hitler's argumentation, and quite necessarily so.[4]

Given this catastrophic misfire, it becomes imperative to consider in detail to what extent Hitler's speech is in any sense valid. For that the speech has an impact cannot be denied (at least in the play, where it has all the advantages of a fine production). But the impact is not in the world of apocalypse, as Steiner intended, but in the world in which we live, where arguments of the kind A.H. uses are believed quite seriously by educated people; where propaganda is continually going on to diminish the significance of the Holocaust by blaming the Jews themselves for it in various ways; where, in fact, the chief effect of Hitler's peroration, presented with an air of awe and unanswerability, may well be to send away some from the theatre with anti-Jewish prejudices reinforced (not to mention Jews in the audience who somehow feel "betrayed").

DID STEINER HAVE, aesthetically and intellectually, another choice? He could, of course, have given Hitler a very different kind of speech that would have been authentically evil and historically true to the kind of person and ideologue Hitler actually was. Such a speech would have ignored fine-spun theological arguments about Hebraic responsibility for the unique moral pressure of monotheism or for creating concepts of "racism." It would have been an embittered paean of hate against the Jews as (in the *Führer*'s favourite metaphor) "the bacillus in the blood of mankind." Such a speech, an extension of historical truth and biographical evidence,[5] would not, however, have served Steiner's purposes. It might too

[3] In his reply to Martin Gilbert's criticisms (*Jewish Chronicle*, 26 February; *The Times*, 6 March), Steiner says (*The Times*, 11 March) that the Black Messiah idea is "the *parodistic* fantasy of 'A.H.'—that he springs out of the Jewish tradition of radical antinomianism, that he is indeed the 'anti-Messiah' whose acts can pass for messianic." The so-called "Jewish tradition of radical antinomianism" consists of the 18th-century aftermath of Sabbateanism, a highly uncharacteristic episode which is evidently more significant to Steiner than the vast treasure-house of authentic Jewish tradition.

[4] Again, replying to Gilbert, Steiner accuses Gilbert of being "wilfully insensitive to literature" in complaining that no answer is given in the play to Hitler's speech. Steiner cites Milton's Satan and Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor as deliverers of disturbing but unanswered speeches, left to reverberate in the minds of the reader. (Steiner modestly adds, "I am not, God knows, inferring any comparison between such precedents and my small novel.") Neither Satan nor the Inquisitor, however, deals with matters of red-hot topicality as Steiner does. To evoke a meditative response from a speech that echoes the Neo-Nazis and the anti-Semitic New Left is a *tour de force* that neither Milton nor Dostoevsky would have been journalistic enough to attempt.

[5] See, for example, Chapter III in Professor Eberhard Jäckel's sober study, *Hitler's World View* (1972), pp. 47–66.

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easily have been rejected as puerile, a bit paranoid, and rather out-of-date. And it would not have embodied the principle of evil in a way that could give it a measure of cosmic dignity for a present-day audience. Instead, Steiner made the colossal miscalculation—arising, I suspect (as he has admitted in various interviews, modestly discounting his story-telling talents), from a mixture of vanity, somewhat excessive artistic ambition, and erratic philosophy as well—of attempting to present a picture of evil armed with every advantage of 20th-century intellect and modern eloquence. The result is merely an amalgam of sophistical arguments, seasoned with some Steinerian ideas. As a whole, it remains, harsh as it is to affirm this, an upsetting and misleading piece of anti-Jewish propaganda of a regrettably contemporary kind which may prove to be of aid and comfort to anti-Semites for some years to come, until new fashions of anti-Semitism take over.

There are certain elements in A.H.'s speech that G.S. does not mean to be literally true, yet are supposed to contain some kind of symbolic truth. For example, there is Hitler's assertion that he, as *der Führer*, was responsible for the post-War establishment of the state of Israel. Mr Martin Gilbert, in his critical remarks on the literal historical inaccuracies of Steiner's play (both in Hitler's speech and elsewhere), has shown that this is by no means the case; to exhibit these historical distortions, given the moral ambiguity of the play's effect and its likely impact on audiences oblivious to Steiner's metaphysical aspirations, is useful.

BUT STEINER probably does not really believe that Hitler brought about the Jewish state. The notion seems to him, in some odd literary transvaluation, to be poetic, in the same way as the notion that Hitler was "really" a Jew. How better than with such conceits to express the kinship between good and evil and their common root? Hitler as the "Black Messiah" or Antichrist is too attractive an idea to omit (even if obtained by the unworthy device of using the adage "Every cloud has a silver lining . . ." by which it would surely be possible to show that the guillotine could serve as an excellent cure for headaches).

Similarly, Hitler's argument that his racialism was derived from the Jewish doctrine of theological election is not, I surmise, intended to be taken as literally valid. I can hardly believe that Steiner is unaware of the vast differences between the Jewish concept of the "Chosen People" and the Nazi racial doctrine of "Nordic" superiority. But he has no penchant for clarifying specific differences. He is always seeking to make some much more general point: that idealism is the source of the world's greatest evils. He seems to be saying that as soon as any group of people band together for some large purpose which they can express in strong words and to which they feel deep devotion, they immediately begin fatally to divide mankind into "Us" and "Them"; and the stage is set for persecution and warfare. Whether the justification is elaborated in racial terms or in some other way, ethnic, theological, or ideological, is less important than the fact of division. This is another form of his emphasis on the evil potentialities of the Word; for language, thought, the adoption of any kind of verbalised programme for changes in the human condition can lead to divisiveness and mayhem.

But, of course, if the way that A.H. puts the matter strikes an answering chord in many a member of the audience, it will need to be resisted just as if G.S. were putting it forward as literal truth. This is the aspect that many British reviewers singled out (in a lazy-minded phrase) as "having some truth in it. . . ." In fact, it is recognisable as one of the mainstays of the bar-room pseudo-intellectual anti-Semite. I would insist that Judaism-as-a-racialist-religion is a thesis that does not survive the least critical scrutiny, and that only someone quite ignorant of any Jewish history and culture could put forward such a theory. There are today white Jews, black Jews, yellow Jews, and, I would hope, red Jews. Whole tribes, ethnic groups, even nations have been converted to Judaism in the recorded past, without the slightest inquiry as to their racial make-up or origin. The bans against marrying a non-Jew are no more racialist than Christian bans against marrying non-Christians; they are promulgated for the preservation of a faith, not of a race. Yet the charge of "racialism" against Judaism is as topical as this morning's paper; indeed it is the commonest charge made against the Jews. No less an intellectual than Arthur Koestler once wrote a book—*The Thirteenth Tribe* (1976)—to press this charge. Though of Jewish origin himself, he exhibited an obliviousness to Jewish history and thought that he would have been ashamed of in any other field of research.[6] At the present moment, the Jews stand officially convicted of "racialism" before the tribunal of the United Nations, at the instigation of certain political enemies in the Arab world.[7]

THE IDEA that the Jews are the "Chosen People of God" is not racialist. Judaism is a universal religion of monotheism; but it is not a universal Church. Other forms of monotheism are freely and openly acknowledged under the rubric of the "Seven Laws of the Sons of Noah." In the Bible, non-Jewish

[6] See my article, "Koestler's Racism", in *Midstream* (New York), March 1977.

[7] The New Left has adopted this charge as a dogma.

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monotheists are honoured, eg. Noah, Job, Cyrus (who is even given the title "Messiah"). The Jewish concept is far *less* exclusivist than that of Christianity, since the Jews have never condemned people outside their Church to "damnation", or regarded them as being "sinful" for not being Jews. The fact that the Jews are a nation as well as a Church is an expression of their *lack* of exclusivism; just as the Protestant idea that there can be a Church of Scotland or a Church of England is *less* exclusivist than, say, the Catholic idea that there can be only one true supranational Church, to which all people, world-wide, must belong. The Jews call themselves "a nation of priests" and "the first-born son of God", and this gives them a sense of a special mission to mankind—a mission, one must say, that has involved far more suffering than privilege. The rest of mankind are also "sons of God" and are the flock for whom God cared enough to appoint an hereditary priesthood, with its own special Rule incumbent only on itself, but which anyone with a vocation may join.

As for A.H.'s contention that the Israelite massacre of the Canaanites should be put in the same category as the Nazi massacre of the Jews, what could be more specious? The Israelites fought against the Canaanites with sword in hand, a band of outlaw slaves fighting against the entrenched great ones of the earth for a right to freedom and a place of their own. This class revolt (for it was no less) involved cruelty (partly because the Israelites did not want to set themselves up as another ruling class with Canaanites as their slaves); and it all took place in vastly different societies, some 3,500 years ago. How can this be compared with the Nazis' cowardly destruction of helpless, unarmed and loyal citizens, on psychotic grounds, in an age of supposedly high European culture and civilisation? The Israelite massacres (highly exaggerated by the writer of *Deuteronomy*, as modern Bible scholars agree) were, if you like, comparable to the cruelties of Spartacus in the ancient world, not to the sick bestialities of the Nazis.

I HAVE BEEN DEALING so far with parts of A.H.'s speech which G.S. does *not* endorse in full literalness. But now we come to the part of the speech in which Hitler—and here we get an inkling of what he was busy reading in the jungle—becomes a full-blown Steinerian. He is now found to be expressing views taken word for word from Steiner's other writings.

There is, first, the argument in which Hitler accuses the Jews of "the blackmail of transcendence", a phrase transferred (like much in this part of the speech) directly from the pages of *Bluebeard's Castle*. Here G.S., through A.H.'s mouth, presents his own theory of the origins of anti-Semitism. It is, simply put, that the Jews are hated by the world because of the impossible demands of the Jewish invention of monotheism.

> "The Jew emptied the world by setting his God apart, immeasurably apart from man's senses. No image. No concrete embodiment. No imagining even. A blank emptier than the desert. Yet with a terrible nearness. Spying on our every misdeed, searching out the heart of our heart for motive."

In the beginning there was the Jew Moses; and later came two other Jews, renewing and intensifying the demand to transcend the flesh and the self: Jesus and Marx. Anti-Semitism, then, is simply the rebellion of the natural man against the abstractness and asceticism of the Jewish demand for unity and self-sacrifice. As George Steiner put it in *Bluebeard's Castle*,

> "Monotheism at Sinai, primitive Christianity, messianic socialism: these are the three supreme moments in which Western culture is presented with what Ibsen termed 'the claims of the ideal.' These are the three stages, profoundly interrelated, through which the Western consciousness is forced to experience the blackmail of transcendence. 'Surmount yourself. Surpass the opaque barriers of the mind to attain pure abstraction. Lose your life in order to gain it. Give up property, rank, worldly comfort. Love your neighbour as you do yourself—no, much more, for self-love is sin. Make any sacrifice, endure any insult, even self-denunciation, so that justice may prevail.' Unceasingly the blackmail of perfection has hammered at the confused, mundane, egotistical fabric of common instinctual behaviour."

It is not very clear to me how this argument can be reconciled with the previous argument: that the Jews are the originators of violent race-hatred. If the Jewish massacre of the Canaanites is equivalent to Hitler's massacre of the Jews, how can the Jews be hated as setting too *high* a moral requirement? Actually, the two arguments *were* reconciled by Nietzsche in a rather simple way—the Jews "invented conscience", but not for themselves, for other people! In other words, the Jews devised a way to make other people their slaves: to shackle them with ethics, while remaining immorally free from conscience themselves. Nietzsche rather admired this trick, which he thought showed how close the Jews were to being *Übermenschen*, above good and evil, and up to every dodge in pursuit of their own inexorable ends. Hitler sometimes followed this Nietzschean line (but, of course, without allowing it to lead him into any admiration of the Jews).

G.S., however, does not make his A.H. so

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Nietzschean. The two arguments are allowed to contradict each other; not because Steiner does not see the contradiction, but because he has quite another thought in mind. His point is that both the ruthlessness of the Jews against their enemies, and their ruthlessness in applying moral standards to themselves and others, are part of one and the same thing: the Jewish mastery of the Word. For language itself, the basis of all human culture, is an abstract force that drives mankind away from the animal satisfactions of the flesh. The "claims of the ideal", implied in language itself with its bodiless abstractions, are necessarily cruel. They lead to merciless rejection of those who do not share the vision and to heartless slave-driving of those who do.

IN THIS WAY, THEN, anti-Semitism has been reduced to a manifestation of the crisis of culture itself. It is not so much a rebellion against its progress and rich achievements, as a reflection of its innate cruelty. The more cultured a society becomes, the more anti-Semitic it is liable to become—because culture itself is unnatural to mankind, which longs continually to return to the silence of the jungle. The Jews, as the supreme representatives of culture, must therefore always be its chief victims.

THERE IS obviously, in the going phrase of the day, "something to be said" for Steiner's explanation of anti-Semitism (and I should note that it is largely based on the theory of Freud). Yet its implications need to be exposed, since it involves huge, ineffable despair about the Human Condition. It is a species of despair which leads to the striking of romantic postures about the inevitability of global disaster; and it goes on to make the Holocaust into a cosmic, rather than a terrestrial catastrophe. To argue that anti-Semitism is part of the human condition and must, accordingly, continue until the end of distinctively human culture, is to do something that I for one would have hardly thought possible—to take the Holocaust too seriously, and indeed, in so doing, to hinder the effort to prevent it from ever happening again. Our intellectual and moral duty must be to look for the actual historical causes of anti-Semitism and of the Holocaust, *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*, and not hypostasise it into a metaphysical manifestation of an ineluctable fate.

By this I do not mean that we should return to the humdrum kind of unimaginative sociological-historical analysis of anti-Semitism that has proved so pitifully inadequate in the past. Steiner, in *Bluebeard's Castle*, argued quite convincingly that explanations in terms of economic conditions, xenophobic fears, *petit-bourgeois* resentments, post-War traumas, and so on, while valid as they go, do not get anywhere near the heart of the matter; and that what is needed is an explanation in terms of "the psychology of religion." Here I agree; but Professor Steiner's attempt to provide such a religious explanation is one I find unhelpful. Moreover, it seems to me to arise from a need to align anti-Semitism with his private theory of despair rather than from a genuine desire to discover its real origins and possible cure.

Here he would have done well to take his cue from Freud. Freud, at least, realised that anti-Semitism was specifically a disease of Christian society rather than of humanity as a whole. As well as attempting to trace it to resentment at the demands of the Father-God (for whom the Jews were held responsible), he attempted to ground it in the place occupied by the Jews in the central Christian myth of sacrifice and atonement, the Crucifixion of Jesus.[8]

Steiner looks away from the awareness that Jewish-Christian relations have anything to do with the origin of anti-Semitism. Steiner even thinks that the specifically Christian elements in Christianity work against anti-Semitism (since they mitigate the severity of monotheism by providing a kind of polytheism in the shape of the Trinity, the adoration of the Virgin, and the cult of the Saints). It is, he believes, the elements of Judaism in Christianity that cause anti-Semitism. The moral demands of Judaic-derived monotheism are so bewilderingly great that a fund of aggression builds up in the Christian mind against God. And this desire to kill and obliterate God expresses itself in the attempt to kill and obliterate the Jews, "the inventors of God." In so far as anti-Semitism is endemic to Christendom, it is only because Christianity is the religion that contains the greatest amount of Judaism.

Whatever "little something" can be said for this theory, its essential fault is that it ignores the most obvious feature of Christianity, the Crucifixion myth; this is specifically Christian, and yet so very far from having mitigated anti-Semitism, its chief fount and origin. The Jews form part of the *dramatis personae* of the central Christian myth of salvation; and it is because of the role given to them in this persistent myth that they have encountered a "metaphysical hatred" in Christendom for nearly two millennia. Anyone who has studied this record—the references to the Jews in the Gospels; the anti-Jewish diatribes of the Early Fathers (St Chrysostom might well have been quoted by A.H.); the history of the blood-libel accusations of the Middle Ages; the terrible massacres of Jews at the

[8] I have criticised Freud's actual analysis of this problem in an essay in *Midstream* (February 1980): "Freud and Moses."

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time of the Crusades; the appalling anti-Jewish writings of Martin Luther—knows that there was nothing new about the Nazi persecutions . . . except their technological scale and their ideological wrappings of race-theory, by which the ancient theological presentation of the Jews as the people of the Devil was updated in pseudo-biological terms. There is no need to resort to some fine-spun theory about the Jews being the Representatives of Conscience for Christians (though on an unconscious level, wherever that may be, this might well have been the case). There is a much more obvious historical constellation of mythology and beliefs to be noted, which openly, consciously, and explicitly marks out the Jews as representatives of cosmic Evil on earth.

LET ME ADD a few more words about this to point up any differences with Steiner in this dramatic context. The central Christian myth is that the human-divine figure of Jesus was done to death by the Powers of Evil; but that his death acted as an atonement for the sins of mankind, or for all those who mystically share in his sufferings. There is little new in this: it is a version of one of the most ancient religious devices known to mankind for warding off the wrath of the gods, i.e. human sacrifice. Moreover, from very early times, human sacrifice has involved a figure of Evil who is saddled with the responsibility of performing the Necessary Murder. Mankind, I am afraid, has rarely had the courage to perform human sacrifice without shifting the blame for the barbarous deed to someone whom the community can disown.

These are the dark figures: Set in Egyptian myth, or Loki in Scandinavian sagas. Such mythological figures stand for a social reality: the ritual by which, after the performance of a human sacrifice, the wretch who performed the deed of blood was hounded out of the community with every appearance of horror and revulsion, though in fact he only did what the community required him to do, and so saved the whole community from the wrath of the gods. In the Gospels, the figure of Judas fulfils this function. He betrays Jesus and suffers eternal execration, yet he obeys a fated compulsion and is even designated by Jesus himself for his role. Without Judas, there would have been no Crucifixion and all mankind would have remained under sentence of eternal damnation. And Judas is the eponymous representative of the whole Jewish people, who play the Judas-role in the Christian imagination throughout the ages. For the continued life of the Sacred (and Accursed) Executioner to carry the burden of the necessary crime in every generation is also part of the myth. This, I feel, accounts for the mixture of awe and hatred with which the Jews are regarded in Christendom. As the people of the Devil (the cosmic power of Evil chiefly responsible for the death of Jesus), they may be expected to have great magical powers as well as every possible evil propensity. At the same time, their continued sufferings reassure the Christian faithful that it is the Jews, and not themselves, who carry the guilt for the death of Jesus on which their salvation depends, but of which, like Pilate, they can wash their hands.[9]

The medieval Christians never had a "final solution" for the Jews (as they had for the tragically exterminated Albigensians) because they needed the Jews to survive as witnesses to the Crucifixion, absolving Christianity of responsibility for what was most essential to it. Why, then, did Hitler conceive the idea of finally wiping out the Jews altogether? Hitler was not a Christian; but he inherited from the past the whole pathological scheme by which the Jews were the earthly representatives of cosmic Evil. When this scheme survives in a *post*-Christian form, it is even more deadly than in classical Christendom, for the Jews then become a "virus" that can be socially destroyed, rather than the necessary technological representatives of the Devil. Yet older precedents do exist for a programme of wiping out the Jews completely. These precedents exist in one millenarian myth which envisaged a final battle of annihilation against the army of "the Antichrist", who would be the leader of a Jewish empire centred on Jerusalem. The connections between Hitler's thinking and the tradition of this kind of millenarianism need full exploration; here it is sufficient to point out that Hitler did indeed regard himself as a millenarian figure ("the thousand-year *Reich*"), and as a kind of Messiah Triumphant for whom the Final Solution was permitted.

NOW, WHAT G.S.'S A.H. should have known is that this whole human-sacrificial complex exists in Christianity, but not in Judaism. The Hebrew Bible sets its face against human sacrifice, and interprets originally human-sacrificial myths (such as the Cain and Abel story, and the Abraham and Isaac story) in a sense inimical to human sacrifice. The great historical mission of the Hebrew Bible was to provide a form of religion in which human sacrifice was outlawed, and in which the concept of individual responsibility for one's deeds was advocated, as against the age-old doctrine of vicarious atonement and any revival of pagan modes of religious justification. Steiner, however, appears to be quite oblivious to this theological gulf between Judaism and Christianity. He regards Judaism and Christianity as a continuum, the only difference being that Christianity

[9] For a full study of this theme, see my forthcoming book *The Sacred Executioner.*

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sets its moral demands on an even higher level than Judaism.

This uncritical view drives Steiner to offer a quite inadequate account of basic moral positions. He sees Judaism as setting an abstract, inhuman standard which the natural man is bound to resent—while Christianity goes even further in its "characteristically Jewish demands."

> "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it? . . . But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."
>
> *Deuteronomy*, 30

I am moved to reverse the whole pattern of the G.S./A.H. argument, to the extent that it is a serious intellectual proposition. It is characteristic of Judaism to stress the *possibility* of the moral life; to say that God's law has been tailored to the needs and limitations of the human flesh (which is, after all, the creation of God and is not evil). It is characteristic of Christianity to stress the *impossibility* of the moral life (see Paul's, Epistles), and to set standards at a strained, angelic level, in order to emphasise the indispensability of vicarious atonement by the Crucifixion of Jesus and the desperate wickedness of the natural man, who cannot be saved by his own efforts.

Nor is God Himself regarded in Judaism in the utterly abstract way that Steiner alleges. The utterly abstract God was the God of Aristotle, not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (The Aristotelian God was imported into Christianity as the "Impassible" Father-God, and those who attempted to re-assert the passionate Jewish Father-God were prosecuted as "Patripassian" heretics.) The Talmud was once denounced—by the prosecutor in the Disputation of Paris of 1240—for asserting that God the Father was capable of suffering!

George Steiner's assertion of an inhuman Judaism, abstractly superior to human needs, is his own invention. It may, as I suspect, correspond to his own European idealisation of the untrammelled intellectual, above all ties of land and tribe, the quintessential *luftmensch* (this fantasy, I may add, also owed much to Romantic elaborations of the legend of the "Wandering Jew", a legend which is not of Jewish origin).

G.S.'S THEORY of anti-Semitism, against the background of the portage of A.H. to San Cristobal, is thus theologically and historically thin and quite inadequate. Anti-Semitism is not caused by the "Jewish elements" in Christianity, provoking resentment from the natural man. It is caused by the atavistic, pagan element in Western religion by which the Jews are regarded as a collective Executioner of a central human sacrifice. We have to do here with a *shifting of moral responsibility*, by which the individual lays his moral burden firstly on Jesus himself, who dies to save him; and secondly on the Jews, who bring about the necessary death of Jesus. (The root of the theological matter lies, I suspect, in the ancient dualism derived from Gnosticism, in which both the earth and the whole of mankind were regarded as under the thrall of the Devil.) In any event, the Jews have been elected, "chosen" if you will, to the position of scapegoat so that all others can escape from guilt into the innocence of childhood, and recover the joy of Eden.

IN MY VIEW, Steiner's own philosophy shares something of this profound dualism. His A.H. comes to us like Mephistopheles to Faust: to claim his due for the achievements of civilisation. It seems to me to be the *reductio ad absurdum* of Steiner's theory of culture that this polymath, dedicated humanist, and apostle of ideas should have felt it necessary to dignify Hitler by elevating him into a metaphysical principle.

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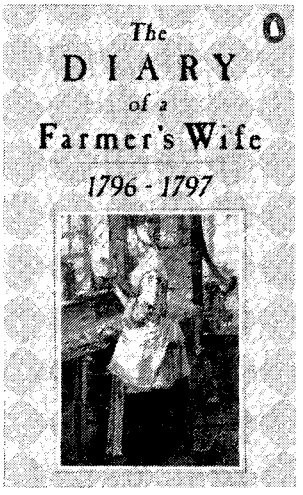
Nikolai Tolstoy

The Diary of Nobody at All

Penguin, the BBC & a Spurious Documentary



ONE SUMMER'S day in 1964 I was strolling through Sloane Square and paused before the windows of Messrs W. H. Smith. My eye lighted greedily on a book whose cover portrayed a lady engaged in household duties. *The Diary of a Farmer's Wife 1796-1797* appeared an equally appealing title, so I parted with 27/6d., bought some cream cakes from the Polish shop in South Kensington, and was soon luxuriating in my armchair with a cup of tea in one hand and the farmer's wife in the other.

I had long been fascinated by English society during the period of the French Revolution and Revolutionary Wars, collected books, newspapers and manuscripts of the period, and planned a sprawling historical novel to be set in the years 1799–1805. Much of it was written but subsequently burned in an accident, but my interest in the period remained. The greatest pleasure of a study of history, one perhaps a little unfashionable among professional scholars, is the possibility of removing oneself in mind to another real but departed world. The late 18th century is particularly attractive in this respect: far enough away to be exotically different, near enough to permit sympathetic understanding.

The Diary of a Farmer's Wife promised at first sight to provide a unique glimpse of Georgian England at its most endearing. Though memoirs, diaries and correspondence of contemporaries abound and speak to us clearly across the divide, a diarist at that level of society appeared to be a *rara avis*. It is likely that only a minority of farmers, still less their wives, were literate at the time; and the likelihood that a diary containing the writer's most intimate personal reflections should have been penned and survived seemed remote.

Yet here at least seemed to be just such a memoir, and it was only surprising that the discovery of the Diary of Anne Hughes had not caused more noise. I devoured a huge cream meringue and read on. At once I was gripped by feelings of doubt and disappointment. The first day's entry read as follows:

> "*February 6th.* Today hav John and I bin wedd thys 3 yere and here I doe sett downe all that I doe everry daye. Todaye I didde doe mye butter maken leving Sarah to cooke moste off thee dinner, as thee butter was a longe tyme cummin, indeed nott till John hadde putt in a crown piece and turned didde itt com, the churne bein very heavie. Sarah didde burne thee dinner, like she always doe, ande John was verrie crosse therebye, he mislyking Sarahs cooken, so I doe sometime have to lett him think itt is mee. Men be verrye tiyresome some-times."

Could this really be authentic? The idiosyncratic spelling seemed reminiscent more of "*ye olde teashoppe*" than the late 18th century. However, it is hard to prove a negative in such matters, and it is just possible that a self-taught countrywoman might evolve some such bizarre transliteration. What was really hard to swallow was the warm-hearted gibing at her husband, a sort of coy, allusive humour very much deployed in pre-War women's journals but to my mind improbable in the supposed setting of the *Diary*.

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This humour persists throughout the record, growing more sickly with every page. A witch, complete with broomstick and cat, is seen flying in the village. When the news reaches Anne Hughes's farm,

> "John cummen in doe saye itt be nowte att all, onlie what folkes doe thynk, ande hee will goe hymselfe sum daye and see, but nott hee itt bee onlie brave words."

John Hughes, in fact, was what passed for a right old character in suburban England of the 1930s. Hard-working and robust, he tends at times to overeat a little and drink a mug of beer too much—excesses which set the authoress in a titter of mirth. But with these venial faults he was good-natured and easily managed. When upset over a dead calf, the maid Sarah (another coyly lovable "character") brought her master some elderberry wine. When he left contented, Anne

> "didde laffe att Sarah ande saye shee bee nout butt a sly baggidge, att whyche shee didd laffe alsoe ande saye a man like thee master was all thee better for a bitte off fussen ande I didd laff withe her, knowen itt toe be true."

The third "character" is Mrs Hughes herself; hard-working, bossy, inclined to be put out by and to put down pretentious neighbours, but house-proud and fearfully lovable too. These three, John and Anne Hughes and their maid Sarah, are portrayed as faintly realistic, if trying, characters. All the others, Lord and Lady of the Manor, parsons, farmers, labourers and the like, are totally cardboard characters. In many cases they even lack names, though it will be seen that this was for a purpose.

STILL, ONE COULD scarcely complain. Boring and conceited housewives must have existed as much in 1797 as in 1937, as must their dull husbands and sub-soubrette maids. If it was true, it was interesting. But what was much more noticeable even than the pasteboard nature of the characters was what was omitted from the book. Even a name on a gravestone can excite sympathy through association, but what is strikingly lacking in the *Diary of a Farmer's Wife* is personal names.

We are not told the name of the farm or the village in which it lay. The name of the local market town is also carefully left out, and indeed the names of only two towns are mentioned at all: Hereford and Telford. The local landowner's house is cautiously referred to as "thee Bigge House", and its owners simply as Lady Susan and her husband, an anonymous Lord. These omissions are the more striking in that it is clearly difficult in a diary covering seventeen months not to mention certain places or people; and this awkwardness comes across from the text, which frequently betrays a consciousness of the anomaly.

Similarly, there is a total absence of prices. As one of Mrs Hughes's limited characteristics is that of extreme thrift, this strikes one as odd. We see again that Mrs Hughes goes to some lengths to conceal precise sums. Thus when she is represented as irritated with a finely-dressed neighbour, she describes her as mincing "alongside mee prating off her newe cloathes ande that thee gown shee is waring *coste soe muche* . . ." (my italics). Had Anne Hughes already forgotten how much when she wrote her diary that night?

As remarkable is the absence of any reference to any event, public or private, specifically relating to the years 1796–97. Long gossiping conversations are reported verbatim, but no character betrays a knowledge of the fact that Britain was at war, or that her hereditary enemy had actually invaded neighbouring Wales in February 1797. This, of course, is not an insuperable objection to the diary's authenticity, since in remote Herefordshire—if Herefordshire it was—the inhabitants might not have felt much concern with great events. But there were aspects of the war, such as the rise in agricultural prices and the raising of the supplementary militia (December 1796), which affected every village in the land.

Even if one assumes that Mrs Hughes was solely concerned with her house and garden the account reads unsatisfactorily. The farmhouse has a kitchen, parlour, bedrooms, etc., like any other house, but there are no details to lend verisimilitude such as chance mentions of particular features. All is anonymity, inside and out. Once, as an exercise, I listed all the references to John Ridd's farm contained in Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* (1869). From these I was able to reconstruct a very exact map and description of the house and farmyard. There was no single set-piece description, but all tallied and was so consistent as to suggest that Blackmore had in point of fact a real farmhouse in mind.[1] Nothing could be more different from Anne Hughes's nebulous dwelling-place.

ANOTHER OBVIOUS absentee from the text is the use of dialect words. The strange spelling is clearly

[1] Cf. *Blackmore Studies: Journal of the Blackmore Society* (1969), i, p. 3.

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intended to reflect archaism and the fact that the authoress was an autodidact. These hardly account, for example, for her spelling the word "tea" on one occasion "tay", and on another "tee." One imagines that the spelling is supposed to be governed by phonetics: why, then, two separate pronunciations?

The substance of the *Diary* is, moreover, decidedly unusual. Like most diaries, its taking up and leaving off are dictated by extraneous causes (a wedding anniversary and the conception of a child). The story contains a number of sub-plots of varying length and importance. All, without exception, have a neat beginning and end satisfactorily in a way rarely met with in real life. When Sarah has a premonition that her mother will die, she promptly dies. When a witch is reported at Gun's Cot, the gypsy couple who caused the scare are at once found there. The maid Sarah conducts a bucolic romance; two days after it is broken off she meets a clergyman whose courtship is neatly crowned with a wedding three pages before the diary ends. The great lady of the locality, the wife of an Earl or Marquis ("nott a bitte uppish", thank goodness) is a bosom friend and confidante of the farmer's wife. She contracts consumption and dies, all within the diary.

And so on: if only life were so neat—but then the Almighty would need to be a novelist . . . or at least a diary forger.

IT WILL SURPRISE no one by this stage that I rose from my armchair in the full conviction that the *Diary* was indeed a forgery. This was confirmed by a swift check of the authoress's quite astonishing ignorance of life in the 18th century, and of farming in particular. Thus, John Hughes the farmer in 1796 is represented as sporting blue silk stockings, blue velvet breeches, and a purple plush coat edged with gold lace, while his wife buys a spinet. The Lord's estate is administered by his butler, and his Lady possesses a personal footman. An impromptu village gathering is empowered to install a vicar, without consulting or informing the bishop or any other ecclesiastical authority. Sarah's sister lives at Telford: a place-name untraceable in the 18th century (it is not in Cary's *Roads*). "Fatte cowes" go to market in *February* . . . and so on.

Finally, the format of the *Diary* itself is unconvincing. Anne Hughes wrote it, she explains, almost every night by candle-light in the bedroom she shared with her husband. Some entries are more than a thousand words long. We are asked to believe that she succeeded in keeping its existence a secret from him for a year-and-a-half. We are required, too, to credit that she did not know the days of the week. Repeatedly she informs us that she went that day to church, "it bein Lords daye." The trouble is that almost invariably it was not. Odder still is the suggestion that in 1796 Sunday fell successively on the 3rd and 12th March!

There was more than enough evidence that the *Diary* was a fake, and a pathetically poor one at that. Disgruntled at the waste of 27/6d., I banished the book from the non-fiction section of my library shelves, and for the moment forgot about it. I never read a review or saw another copy for sale, and dismissed the fraud as too trifling to notice. Still, a residual curiosity led me to write in March 1977 to the publisher to enquire whether my suspicions were correct.

The book had been published by Countrywise Books, an offshoot of IPC (the International Publishing Corporation). The Assistant Editor, Mr Michael Smith, replied courteously to say that the *Diary* was indeed a forgery, as "was revealed beyond doubt in recent correspondence regarding copyright. . . ." But his predecessors, he explained, had been deceived "right from the start."

MY INTEREST LAPSED AGAIN, until I read in the *Radio Times* to my surprise that the diary was to be dramatised on BBC 2, and was described as wholly authentic. The BBC clearly hoped to make much of it, as the screening took place on Christmas Day 1978, when a mince-pie-stuffed population was rightly ready for an orgy of arcadian nostalgia. Full-bosomed dairymaids did their bit in the golden cornfields; and the film was altogether more fun than the book, possessing as it did the great advantages of presenting a real house and real people. It even had a real diary, which Anne Hughes was seen penning in a pastiche 18th-century hand.

The TV programme was repeated; and as Anne Hughes appeared to be acquiring an unwarranted new lease of life, I wrote a polite and brief letter to the *Radio Times*, tactfully praising the dramatisation but pointing out that it was based on a known forgery. Up to this moment I had presumed that, whatever the circumstances of the original forgery, everyone subsequently concerned with its presentation had been innocently duped.

A fresh aspect now revealed itself. The *Radio Times* chose not to publish the letter, but passed it

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to the BBC producer, a Mr Michael Croucher. He in turn wrote me a polite explanation of what he saw as the facts. His argument subsequently appeared in print as an introduction to a new edition of the *Diary* (Allen Lane, 1980), and is substantially as follows.

A Mrs Jeanne Preston stayed on a Herefordshire farm about 1896. There she met Anne Hughes's daughter, who told her the tale of her mother's life and presented her with a manuscript memoir or diary, since lost. Mrs Preston later "edited" this material, adding some extraneous matter of her own, and sold it for publication in *Farmers Weekly* in 1937. In the light of these facts, Mr Croucher accepted that the published work dramatised by him contained some matter not originally in the Anne Hughes canon, but that this material, too, was of independent historical value. The work was a genuine historical document, in the same way that folk-tales contain genuine elements of past history and mentality.

He clinched these arguments by claiming that, as his own experiences on a farm in Canada during World War II were similar to those described by "Anne Hughes", farming life had presumably changed little in a century-and-a-half. I felt that, as evidence of the "*Diary's*" authenticity, this argument was a little puzzling: had Anne Hughes been in reality a Canadian land-girl?

The fact is, as I pointed out in my reply, that these arguments had no validity at all. The third-hand account of Mrs Preston's claims has to be set against

> *1.* the tissue of absurdities, anachronisms, inconsistencies and outright errors that permeates every page;
> *2.* the fact that Mrs Preston had after all palmed off the whole text as an authentic diary, and pocketed a few from *Farmers Weekly*.

The argument that every single error is to be accounted for as an interpolation is ingenious but unconvincing. Perhaps the most striking factor of all this odd story is Mrs Preston's hopeless incompetence as a forger. Had she bothered to consult Parson Woodforde's diary,[2] or any other of a number of readily available sources, she could have concocted a tale which would have been difficult to disprove with certainty. If she really stayed in Herefordshire, a few names from gravestones and a real parish would have provided a credible background. Her historical knowledge is too sketchy even to have been acquired from the novels of Jeffery Farnol or Baroness Orczy, and seems likely to derive from women's pulp magazines of the 1930s—so far as her "story" required any information at all. Clearly Mrs Preston was an uneducated woman, but one of some vanity and humble literary pretensions. It may even be that the weird spelling was her own, rather than a poor misconception of how people had written in the past. One cannot be harsh to her memory, since the real fault surely lies with the better-educated but naïve London folk who allowed themselves to be deceived by her trash.

FOR THE DECEPTION lives on. The Penguin Books edition (1981) reached the best-seller lists. The introduction by the producer of the BBC dramatisation, Michael Croucher, conceded that the "*Diary*" "should not stand as a historical text in the conventional sense", but appeared to be suggesting it was one in an unconventional sense. By this he meant that the sources behind Mrs Preston's text were authentic, and that all inaccuracies could be put down to Mrs Preston herself. Penguin Books themselves not unreasonably took this to mean that they were publishing material about a real person, and classified the book as "Autobiography", and "a unique and intimate glimpse into the very stuff of life as it was in the days before the Industrial Revolution."

Next Folio Books announced in their 1981 list that they were publishing the *Diary*, under the title adopted by Michael Croucher: *Anne Hughes, Her Boke*. Folio Books had presumably bought the rights from Penguin and repeated Croucher's arguments in favour of its being an historical document.

> "Its history is obscure, but like a folk-song handed down from generation to generation, an authentic voice shines through"

ran the blurb, and a writer in the Folio Society's magazine for Autumn 1981 expatiated with enthusiasm over the 30-or-so recipes which punctuate the text. (In fact the recipes are as fraudulent as the rest: Anne Hughes could scarcely have got hold of any lemons in March 1796.) Meanwhile the BBC went further and screened the Anne Hughes soap-opera as an educational programme for British schools.

Television education programmes should be concerned about such matters as historical authenticity

[2] The Reverend James Woodforde, *Diary of a Country Parson* (1924–31, 5 vols).

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or literary honesty. Many people are continuing to be deceived, like the lady writing to *The Times* (26 January 1982) from London NW, who declared approvingly that she had been recommending the book to friends for years as providing a uniquely real insight into 18th-century rural life. She claimed that the "feel" of the book was sufficient warranty for its genuineness—an argument strongly deployed by the BBC's producer.

Mr Michael Croucher, Penguin Books, the Folio Society, and the BBC could in reality have readily determined the whole issue at the time the rights were originally obtained, without any tedious attempt to acquaint themselves with the realities of life in Georgian England. A brief telephone call to IPC would have elicited the fact that they had in 1977 received a solicitor's letter from Mrs Preston's daughter. Mrs Preston being dead, her daughter claimed copyright interest in the book on the grounds that it was her mother's sole creation, a claim which IPC at once conceded.

IT IS HARD TO SEE HOW anyone concerned in the recent publication and dramatisation of *The Diary of a Farmer's Wife 1796–1797* could not have made himself aware from the beginning that he was promoting a fake. That Penguin Books were so readily duped by this Loamshire tale of Farmer Broadacres, his wife Prue, and their dog Bob seems surprising. That the BBC swallowed it is less so.

At any rate, Anne Hughes of BBC fame and Penguin notoriety can now join the honourable company of IRA rioters (staging a manoeuvre for the benefit of TV cameras), Churchill's "anthrax bomb" (twisted out of the war documents), the *Washington Post*'s "Jimmy" (fabricated by near-Pulitzer-Prize-winner Janet Cooke), the *New York Times* "reportage" on Cambodia, replete with plagiarisms from Malraux's novel (by a correspondent who in fact travelled only as far as Spain), not to mention the spurious trial of *The Holy Blood & the Holy Grail*. Anne Hughes appeared at the right time.

Why We Don't Tell the Truth

And the Lecturer says,
this is the interesting part,
this is where the development begins,
listen to the extraordinary things
he does with such material,
the way he redeems through working out
themes which you and I might think of.

But the Listening Self:
let the world be pure gift,
nothing to do with effort,
let us pass from exposition
to recapitulation
and so bathe in tunes eternally—
Mozart's word for counterpoint was "work."

Outside, in skied formations,
the working out of harmony
is not concerned with tunes
or professional professionalism;
it lets us academicise
the cruel divine, knowing we
cannot lie to an unlistening ear.

Peter Porter

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Tony Harrison

Sonnets from *The School of Eloquence*

Aqua Mortis

Death's elixirs have their own golden gleam.
I see you clearly: one good, failing eye's
on morning piss caught clumsily "midstream"
it's your first task of the day to analyse.

Each day dawns closer to the last *eureka*,
the urine phial held up to clouding rays
meaning all solutions in life's beaker
precipitate one night from all our days.

Alchemists have skulls, and you have one
that stretches your skin taut, and moulds your face,
and instead of a star sphere for sense of space
there's the transatlantic number of your son,
a 13-digit spell propped by the phone
whose girdling's giddy speed knocks spots off Puck's
but can't re-eye dry sockets or flesh bone.

My study is your skull. *I'll burn my books.*

The Queen's English

Last meal together, Leeds, the Queen's Hotel,
that grandish pile of swank in City Square.
Too posh for me! he said (though he dressed well)
If you weren't wi' me now ah'd nivver dare!

I knew that he'd decided that he'd die
not by the way he lingered in the bar,
nor by that look he'd give with one good eye,
nor the firmer handshake and the gruff *ta-ra*,
but when we browsed the station bookstall sales
he picked up *Poems from the Yorkshire Dales*—

'ere, tek this un wi' yer to New York
to remind yer 'ow us gaffers used to talk.
It's in your line, in't it? ah'll buy yer that.

The broken lines go through me speeding South—

As t'Doctor stopped to oppen woodland yat . . .

and

wi' skill they putten wuds reet i' his mouth.

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Confessional Poetry

When Milton *sees* his "late espousèd saint"
are we sure the ghost's wife 1 or 2?
Does knowing it's himself beneath the paint
make the Rembrandts truer or less true?

But your father was a simple working man,
they'll say, *and didn't speak in those full rhymes.*
His words, when *they came out, would scarcely scan.*

Mi dad's did scan, like yours do, many times!

That quarrel then in Bookends II *between*
one you still go on addressing as "mi dad"
and you, your father comes across as mean
but weren't the taunts you flung back just as bad?

We *had* a bitter quarrel in our cups
and there *were* words between us, yes,
I'm guilty, and the way I make it up's
in poetry, and that much I confess.

Flood

His home address was inked inside his cap
and on every piece of paper that he carried
even across the church porch of the snap
that showed him with mi mam just minutes married.

But if ah'm found at home (he meant found dead)
turn t'water off. Through his last years he nursed,
more than a fear of dying, a deep dread
of his last bath running over, or a burst.

Each night towards the end he'd pull the flush
then wash, then in pyjamas, rain or snow,
go outside, kneel down in the yard, and push
the stop-cock as far off as it would go.

For though hoping that he'd drop off in his sleep
he was most afraid, I think, of not being "found"
there in their house, his ark, on firm Leeds ground
but somewhere that kept moving, cold, dark, deep.

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VENDORS of "marital aids", we're told, now organise coffee mornings or wine-and-cheese evenings to tout their paraphernalia—crupperware parties, so to speak. Ho hum. When D. H. Lawrence made Mellors talk rough with Lady Chatterley, his avowed aim was to make forbidden words homely and tender again, as in Chaucer. Hearing and reading them more often now, I can't quite believe that they've lost the edge of sexist aggression which made them rough in the first place. "Permissiveness", likewise, was billed as liberating sexuality from inhibitions, false glamour, and pornography. Perhaps it has for some people—at the cost of turning love from a quest into a self-conscious romp. But has it really outflanked or devalued pornography? I have the impression that it's merely flooded the market with higher-denomination currency: more tasteful erotica at one extreme, crueller sado-masochism at the other. And the one great objection to pornography is not that it's frank but that it's false. If anyone advertised cars or food as fraudulently as that, they'd be sued.

I sometimes feel the same about travel books. Some of them do for the stay-at-home what pornography does for the celibate: tell luscious lies. Nowadays, it's harder to be misleading, with airlines and travel companies offering ever more voluptuous destinations. We're all geographically experienced now. But even so we can still be fooled—and not merely by travel brochures which show the monuments without the tourist buses. Most travel writers, when they're not busy telling us that the city of Exotica still exhibits an astonishing contrast between the rich quarters and the poor, seem to be boasting about how well they got on with the "real" inhabitants, or how miraculously "unspoiled" their particular beach, taverna, mountain, mooring, slum, or safari park was.

The other objection to travel books is exactly the opposite. When they're truthful, they make us jaded before we start. What have Chicago, Suez, Pretoria, and Mysore in common? By now, you may have guessed: but let me tell you just the same, like a travel-writer. All of them—to me at least—convey a sense of *déjà vu*.

In Chicago, I of course expected gangsters, squalor, and dazzling skyscrapers. There they all were—plus heavy policemen demanding my driving licence, nervous local passengers insisting on winding up the car windows and locking the doors when we stopped at traffic-lights, and malevolent-looking yellow-eyed men lounging around the lake shore. When I went to live in Egypt, it was like coming back to my childhood home, though I'd never been there: the warm dry air, the smell of spice and flowers and gasoline, the buzz of the bazaars, the battered Sphinx and the eternal pyramids, the veiled women and the men in dusty *galabiyas*, the dhows and camels and donkeys, the palms and cactuses, the *khamsîn* stinging with desert sand. South Africa, too, gave a shock of recognition. It was not only the harshness of *apartheid*: "WHITES ONLY" signs on bottle-shops and park-benches, or shack-towns from which one could see the business towers of Johannesburg. It was also long-slumbering assumptions: a society familiar from colonial storybooks, of white men in bush shirts and khaki shorts, attended by picturesque "natives", serving cool drinks on the *stoep* or patiently raking the garden as the sun went down. And Southern India seemed equally familiar: Hastings-type wooden Gothic "residencies" now Government guest-houses; servants gliding in with hot water, fresh towels, and mosquito nets; the ex-Maharajah, now supposedly a civil servant, still ruling from an ornate palace, with statues of elephants formally on guard. All very exotic, undoubtedly: but the real surprise was to find how it tallied with the mental pictures we've cherished all our lives.

THE SAME APPLIES, I think, to Eastern Europe. When I first crossed the East-West border, I had a sense of foreboding. Not for fear of the secret police, or the censorship, or restrictions on travel; not even in preparation for bouts of drinking-and-dialectic with my hosts. The real reason was boredom. Does your heart sink like mine when confronted with books and articles about the Soviet Union? What's it going to be this time? Kremlinology? Speculation about the power-struggle for succession to Brezhnev, with various little-known names, each preceded by a bare initial, said to be significantly omitted from some official guest-list, or still more significantly included higher up? Or is it a new *anekdot*, one of those lumbering "funny stories" about how, say, a Czech has three wishes, and each time asks to be invaded by the Chinese army, because it would have to march across Russia to get there. Or is the latest offering an excited account of ordinary life in Moscow? The housing shortage and the cheap rents; the magnificent subway-stations; the lack of bath-plugs; the arguments with the Intourist guide; the paucity

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of goods in the GUM; the drunkenness; the bureaucracy; the sleek official *chaikas*; the fur hats; the warm greetings and official toasts; the grey-faced policemen; the drabness; the cold.

LONG FED ON SUCH reading, and on Soviet writers whose ideological debates resemble army recruits "getting their dressing" on the parade-ground, I winced a little when a friend in Paris recommended yet another Russian *reportage*. It had caused a stir on its first appearance, several years ago. *Le Monde* had called it "impassioned, but always truthful"; *Tass*, "an abominable forgery." *L'Humanité* had assured its readers that the attitude of the book's authors, "which we firmly condemn, has no connection with the policy of the French Communist Party." That sounded promising. So I read the book.

Its title is *Rue du Prolétaire rouge*, and its authors are a married couple, Nina and Jean Kéhayan.[1] Both were then French Communists, both from immigrant families. Mme Kéhayan's parents were Jewish, from Poland and Bessarabia: they settled in France before World War II, and brought up their daughter as a Communist, rather as others might rear a child in the Catholic faith.

> "They often used an almost magical expression, which conjured in my mind a sunny image, like a modern illuminated manuscript. That expression was 'Soviet Union'; the image was of a new, ultra-modern town, raised up from the great wasteland left by war, thanks to the glorious builders of Communism. At the centre was a wonderful palace, the palace of the pioneers, all in white marble, ennobled by fine pillars. At the front was a great flight of steps. Down it, slowly, came the children of a new world, with smiling lips, blue eyes, and fair hair, all innocence and purity, their beribboned tresses floating in the breeze, and red scarves around their necks: the promise of universal happiness towards which the great family of Communists throughout the world was steadily advancing."

As an adult, Nina became a teacher of Russian.

Her husband, as his name suggests, is of Armenian descent. His parents were children when they escaped massacre by the Turks in 1915; his father ended up as a wheelwright in a Marseille metalworks. At school, Jean was furious when a classmate, the son of a doctor, sneered at him as "an Armenian scholarship boy": he gave up the scholarship, and took evening work at a garage to pay his way. At the age of sixteen he became a Communist, and was much influenced by Roger Garaudy, then still in favour with the Party. In 1967, by now a newspaperman, he went to the Soviet Union for the first time. Also on the trip was Nina. Soon afterwards, they were married. Then, in September 1972, he went to Moscow for two years to work at the *Novosty* Press Agency, taking with him Nina and their two small children, Mélina and Fabrice. On their return, they waited four years before publishing their impressions—and even then, to spare their Russian friends from harassment, they deliberately altered descriptions, places, and names. My own judgment is that their book rings true nevertheless.

By no means all of it is condemnation. Disappointment is the prevailing tone. People were kind to them; as non-diplomatic foreigners they were conspicuous and interesting; they certainly seem to have been hospitable and ready to mix. Some of the frustrations they encountered with obstructive officials could be paralleled by most foreigners living in France; some of the crime and dishonesty can be found in Britain or the United States. But what struck them most forcibly was the absence of the very feature they had thought to typify Communism: that is, human equality. The great flight of steps was a hierarchy after all.

Reality began at the frontier post at Brest-Litovsk. The customs officers took three hours to let their car through, putting it on a ramp to make sure it had no false floor, and banging on the doors to see that they were empty. When they reached their allotted apartment, some 45 minutes from the centre of Moscow, they soon got used to the holes in the road, the broken street door, the absence of a light-bulb in the hallway, the number of times the elevator broke down. Slightly more disturbing was the fact they discovered later: that their neighbour across the hallway, who was very friendly, and with whom they shared a telephone line, was an important official in the police.

The next surprise was the local nursery, for children between the ages of four and seven. Thinking to start Mélina and Fabrice there the following week, Nina looked in on Friday morning. Ah, but what about the medical examination? The children had all the necessary certificates from France; but, no, that wouldn't do: they must be examined at the local clinic. Nina telephoned it. No again: no appointments could be made by telephone. After waiting two hours at the clinic, she obtained one for the end of the following week. Four weeks after that, she got the certificate authorising the children's admission to the nursery. Even then, if a child was absent for more than three days' illness, its urine and stools had to be analysed before it was allowed back.

Later, the Kéhayans placed the children as weekly boarders at another school 30 kilometres

[1] *Editions du Seuil* (Paris, 1978; paperback 1980). Jean Kéhayan has since then been expelled by the French CP.

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from Moscow. Since they were allowed to drive 40 kilometres out without a visa, they set off to visit the school. At the first control point, they were turned back. They applied for visas; there was no response. On inquiring, they were told that the official in question was away ill for two weeks. When he returned, they applied again: still no answer, and no explanation either. Sick of waiting, Jean announced to the *Novosty* Agency that he was going on strike. Four days later, an embarrassed telephone call explained that it was impossible to drive to the school because the road was too bad. Very well: they would go by train or taxi, and Jean would return to work only when the visas arrived. Another four days went by; then came an employee of the agency to explain that the town where the children were boarding was on a road that led to an armaments factory: it was strictly forbidden to foreigners.

BEING FRENCH and not Russian, the Kéhayans refused to take *nyet* for an answer. They persuaded Russian friends to drive them to see the children. The school was palatial—and they saw no sign of either factories or armaments. They soon grew accustomed to getting round ridiculous restrictions—although on one comic occasion they were "shopped" by their son, who was now fluent in Russian.

Shopping was another hazard. Many good things could be bought from the peasant market; but the regular stores suffered from permanent if unpredictable shortages. The traditional method of buying was to go to the department, note its number and the price of the required article, then wait in line at the cash-desk to pay, then take the receipt to collect the goods. At six in the evening, by this system, it could take half an hour to buy a loaf of bread. Even where supermarkets had taken over, the waste of time was almost identical, because the women on the check-out desks verified everything themselves, including the sums done by the cash register.

Mme Kéhayan—who writes more vividly than her husband—is especially good on details like this. But Jean Kéhayan's chapters are also revealing. His accounts of office life, of escape to small restaurants; his very precise definition of Soviet "trade unions" as little more than works councils; his frightening description of a convivial evening which ended in a drunken brawl with someone's throat slit—all these have a kind of anguished candour. More cheerful—almost a holiday—is Mme Kéhayan's narrative of a festive visit to Jean's Armenian relatives, where the immense variety of life away from Moscow becomes evident: it's as refreshing as a trip to Italy in the middle of a Northern winter.

AND, OF COURSE, there's many an *anekdot*. One of the best impugns both bureaucracy and racism. It's March 8, International Women's Day, and a free distribution of flour is announced in a small provincial town. At 7.00 a.m., two hours before the store's due to open, a long queue has formed under the falling snow. At 9.00 a.m., nothing happens. At 10.00, an official car arrives to say that the flour lorry will be late, and that anyway the load is smaller than expected, so there won't be enough to go round. Will all Jewish citizens therefore please go home? Two hours later, the official car comes back. The lorry's on its way: it'll be there at 2.00 p.m., but the load is so small that all non-members of the Party had better go home too. Finally, at about 2.00 p.m., the car returns a third time—to tell the Party faithful that there's no flour: it was just a ruse to keep up morale. Well done, they all say; but on the way home somebody grumbles: "Trust the Jews to profit from it as usual!"

BEHIND such stories, and pervading Kéhayans' book, is the omnipresent fear and envy of the Party, the least of whose members' privileges is the so-called *payok*, the periodic parcel of goodies denied to ordinary mortals. Many would argue, with some justice, that Russia was a tyrannical and inefficient bureaucracy long before the October Revolution, and that Communism has no monopoly of drunkenness, petty crime, inertia, dictatorship, and human waste. All one can say is that two French Communists seem to have found it disappointing. Before they went, Party officials warned them that 90% of those who tried such an experiment ended by deserting the cause. It says something for the Kéhayans' loyalty and idealism that they stayed with it so long. It says much for their discernment and honesty that they felt able to write so candid a book.

But my mind still boggles at it. The details are fascinating; the sense of shock and disillusion is vivid; the writing's adroit and dry with irony. Yet—forgive my bewilderment—how could two well-educated French people in their late twenties ever have expected anything different? Perhaps what we really need is a day-by-day travel book exploring the nooks and crannies of ignorance and misinformation nearer home.

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How Enlightened Is "Dialectical Reason"?

By Ernst Topitsch

> *"Dialectics at bottom is an effort to systematize, or to translate into the realm of manageable, communicable thought, certain unconscious or preconscious modes of apprehending reality, especially social reality. . . . As long as capitalism exists, I do not believe that we will ever be able to declare that Marx was mistaken in his identification of its inner nature."*
> ROBERT HEILBRONER, *Marxism: For & Against*

> *". . . the Dialectical disease. . . ."*
> GOETHE, *sceptically, to* HEGEL (1827)

IN HIS BRIEF but profound essay on the Enlightenment, "*Was ist Aufklärung?*" (1783), Immanuel Kant wrote:

> "Enlightenment is man's escape from his self-imposed tutelage. Tutelage means the inability to make use of his intelligence without another's guidance. This tutelage is self-imposed when its cause is not lack of intelligence but lack of the resolution and courage to make use of this intelligence without another's guidance. *Sapere aude!*—Have the courage to use your own intelligence—is, therefore, the slogan of the Enlightenment. . . ."

The philosopher continued:

> "Laziness and cowardice are the causes why such a large proportion of men, long after nature has absolved them from alien guidance (*naturaliter majorennes*), nevertheless like to remain in tutelage for the rest of their lives; and why it is so easy for others to impose themselves as their guardians. It is so comfortable to be in tutelage. If I have a book that serves me intelligently, a pastor who keeps my conscience for me, a physician who supervises my diet, and so on, I have no need to make any effort myself. I do not need to think, so long as I can pay: others will take over the troublesome business for me. . . ."

All too frequently nowadays one hears talk of a "dialectical enlightenment" capable of achieving incomparably more to help man come of age than the "flat" Enlightenment of the 18th century could do. In many places intellectual trends may be observed which, in the name of "critical" or "emancipatory" aims, demand the politicisation of science, i.e. its subordination to the viewpoints of "social relevance." Again and again we hear the assertion that "bourgeois" science is bankrupt and must be replaced by forms of research and thought appropriate to the people, more specifically the working man or the proletariat. These new forms of knowledge are also said to be "higher", to be "dialectical" and completely beyond the power of the mere "abstract intellectual thinking" of middle-class culture to grasp or assess. Such lines of thought not infrequently lay claim to being "new . . . advanced . . . progressive", or some other fashionable term.

IN THE FACE OF SUCH TRUST in the ostensibly enlightening and emancipatory function of "Dialectics", however, we must immediately remind ourselves of the massive fact that in wide areas of the world people are being forcibly held in tutelage and prevented from using their intelligence precisely in the name of a "dialectical" ideology. Anyone in these parts of the world who shows too much intellectual independence may be deprived of his freedom and subjected to one or another degrading form of brainwashing. More than that: he actually has to publicly praise this brainwashing (as one of the most famous Chinese philosophers of the present time, the aged Fung Yu-lan, recently did). In these progressive societies the population has fallen far behind the measure of intellectual freedom enjoyed by Kant and his contemporaries under the enlightened royal absolutism of Frederick II or other like-minded monarchs. If the people in these societies conform at least outwardly to the official ideology, they should not be reproached with mental laziness or moral cowardice. Individuals of heroic courage—and they exist there too—cannot be made a universal criterion.

But we can also observe that elsewhere people rush into tutelage of their own free will, without

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external compulsion, and renounce the use of their intelligence without alien guidance. They cry out for coloured little handbooks that will "serve the movement" and will relieve them of the "troublesome business" of independent thought, or for a proctor who keeps their conscience for them.

One European philosopher, Professor Hermann Lübbe (of the University of Zurich) has aptly described these trends:

> "The culture of a new counter-Enlightenment is unmistakably spreading, and the opposite appearance which it manages to produce is slowly becoming transparent. The bearers of the new counter-Enlightenment movement are, of all people, the so-called critical intelligentsia; in the first place the academic intellectuals. We see establishing themselves in our European universities centres of political thinking that boast certain knowledge of the road to salvation, based on a superior disregard for reality, and advanced with a burning moralism and noisy intolerance."

It may seem paradoxical that the dark opponents of Enlightenment in our day should be recruited precisely from the intelligentsia and the current ideological neo-obscurantism should be primarily an academic phenomenon. But this paradox, this apparent paradox, is unfortunately the truth. The sacred texts of the Marxist prophets and fathers of the church are spelled out sentence by sentence with the zeal of the scribes.

> "Vetoes on questioning and criticism are propagated; forced professions of faith are instituted; the simple intellectual life in the stabilising confinement of new orthodoxies is gaining in fascination."[1]

But the crown jewel of these endeavours is dialectics, which is supposed to represent a qualitatively higher form of thinking, cognition and knowledge by comparison with mere "bourgeois" science.

BUT WHAT IS THIS "higher knowledge"? What precisely is this dialectic that is credited with such an enormous capacity for cognitive achievement? The answer to this question is not simple, above all because it has so far proved practically impossible to obtain from the representatives of dialectics anything even approaching a clear statement as to what they mean by it. Thus as much as thirteen years ago Professor Hans Albert commented on the arguments of his debating opponent, Dr Jürgen Habermas:

> "The question of what dialectics really is, what advantages it possesses over other ways of looking at things, has not been answered. We may in any case conjecture that it could conceivably be an unsurpassed instrument for mastery of complex situations, even though the secret of its operation remains hidden. . . ."[2]

Today the question still hangs unanswered in space, and the dialecticians have taken good care not to disclose the secret.

IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE to escape the impression that a mystery is being protected from the disenchanting assault of scientific criticism. In most cases it is clearly a matter of safeguarding dogmatic convictions from all critical scrutiny by an appeal to an unverifiable, but ostensibly "higher" knowledge. This emerges particularly clearly on the primitive intellectual level of student radicalism. Thus, one German university instructor in Munich has related her recent experience with Marxist students:

> "The remark that there are differences between the writings of the young and the older Marx was answered by one of Marx's present-day disciples with the almost despairing cry: 'I'm sure that can be explained with the aid of dialectics!' Dialectics appears here not as a particular method of philosophical thought, but as a magic key that makes it possible to preserve a closed system of theory and practice, a system that remains untouched by modern analytical criticism. This system does not exist in reality: as a theory it is an illusion and as practice a rather grisly deception."

After all this we shall hardly be surprised that the dialecticians are so unwilling to make any detailed statements concerning Dialectics. But this constitutes a fresh difficulty: one has, alas, to try to find out for oneself just what this mysterious and ostensibly superior "method" is all about. In addition one has to be prepared to hear the representatives of Dialectics say—no matter what the outcome of these investigations may be—that the dialectic criticised is not the "true" dialectic. Thus the critic becomes entangled in a kind of game of hare and hedgehog: no matter how sound the arguments he advances against the various thought-forms or ritualistic verbalisms claiming to be "dialectics", his adversary explains with a smile that they have no bearing on "true" dialectics. But no one has ever received (and probably never will

[1] Hermann Lübbe, in *Endstation Terror* (Seewald Verlag, 1978). See also, for a liberal and enlightened warning about similar developments on the British scene, Professor Julius Gould's study, *The Attack on Higher Education* (1977). For a recently published American evaluation: George Friedman, *The Political Philosophy of the Frankfurt School* (Cornell University Press, 1981).

[2] Hans Albert, *Im Rücken des Positivimus?*, reprinted in the omnibus volume *Der Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie* (Neuwied-Berlin, 1969), p. 304.

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receive) an answer to the question as to what "true" dialectics really are.

Now it is quite correct that in the course of the history of ideas from Socrates to Martin Heidegger very different, indeed contradictory things have been meant by this ominous expression. But we are concerned here with that dialectic which since Hegel and Marx has played such an important—and (from the standpoint both of science and of humanity) such a fateful—role in the realm of political ideology and which often lays claim to furnishing "unity of theory and practice." Perhaps it will be productive to start from this claim and the difficulties resulting from it.

THE FACT IS THAT the search for scientific truth and the politico-ideological leadership of men have different goals in view and employ correspondingly different methods.

Even with animals the procedure of trial-and-error is fundamental to the acquisition and expansion of knowledge, using the word in the widest sense. This was strongly stressed by Konrad Lorenz in his important book *Die Rückseite des Spiegels.*[3] The process involves the pursuit of experiments which may lead either to success or to failure. Successful modes of behaviour are retained and practised; unsuccessful ones are abandoned. This process is developed by humans into a conscious and methodically thought-out construction and testing of ever more demanding hypotheses. In this process, failures are by no means an evil to be avoided at any price, but a practically unavoidable means of discovering the truth. They make possible the elimination of those hypothetical assumptions that do not stand the test. To maintain hypotheses that fail when put to the test is not in the interests of the acquisition of information. Thus the basic attitude here is one of experimental testing, not of dogmatic assertion.

Things are quite different in the domain of politics and ideology, where the aim is to achieve reliable social behaviour and group solidarity. Here the concern is not the truth, but the motivational force of the relevant thought-form, which would be diminished by failure and refutation. This is done by means of various procedures that may be described as "Immunisation Strategies." One of these consists in rendering the thesis immune to inner contradiction. If the pressure of contradictions is frankly admitted, refutation is impossible and any assertions can apparently be maintained against all logical and even empirical objections. This strategy can appear in a psychologically particularly impressive form when an ostensible "logic of contradiction" of this sort is presented as a "higher logic."

But there is also another important difference between the search for truth and social leadership, which has likewise only recently been perceived. Whereas scientific knowledge is *Wertfrei*, devoid of value judgment, ideological leadership systems are rooted in value, since they make assertions regarding the meaning and purpose of the world and of human existence. Here the world order is a profoundly value-related order. It is directed towards the salvation of man, who can derive from it a meaning for his existence, ultimately valid norms for his actions, and possibly also an absolute guarantee for the success of behaviour in conformity with these norms. An evaluating interpretation of the world such as this, which goes back to the dawn of history as known to us and probably way beyond it into prehistoric epochs, cannot, in view of the profound difference between knowing and evaluating, between *erkennen und werten*, maintain its claim to truth; and it has been supplanted by the methods of non-evaluating science. The modern analysis of ideologies has actually demonstrated that such an interpretation of the world order may be supported upon various, indeed any, politico-moral values, which are then "derived" from it with a claim to "absolute" validity in a process of circular reasoning.

PERHAPS THESE BRIEF REMARKS are sufficient as an introduction, to make clear the politico-ideological function of Dialectics. Even in the early Middle Ages the appeal to a supposed "higher logic" was already an important instrument of authoritarian ecclesiastical domination. One of the outstanding advocates of this doctrine in the 11th century was St Petrus Damiani, who also coined the notorious phrase that Philosophy should be subordinate to Theology as the maid to the mistress—*velut ancilla dominae.* But in order to protect the dogmas even more effectively against all criticism, this flag-bearer of extreme orthodoxy thought up something quite brilliant: ordinary logic is valid only for the realm of creation, but it cannot be applied to God.[4] Thus this defender of the faith became one of the spiritual forefathers of all those who postulate a double logic: a "lower" logic for general use and a "higher" one for more sublime purposes and regions.

At a later date, Hegel too took his place in this tradition. In his view of things, mathematics, formal logic and the exact disciplines are reduced to "mere thinking of the intelligence (*blosses*

[3] Konrad Lorenz, *Die Rückseite des Spiegels: Versuch einer Naturgeschichte des menschlichen Erkennens* (Munich, 1973); see also Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge: an Evolutionary Approach* (1972), and his essay "On the Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance" in ENCOUNTER (September 1962).

[4] Etienne Gilson and Ph. Boehner, *Christliche Philosophie* (Paderborn, 1954), p. 290.

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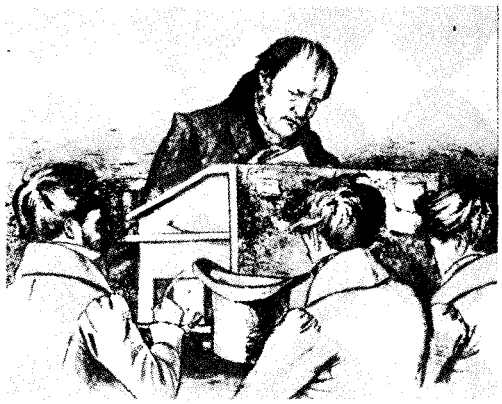
Verstandesdenken)", above which rises the higher realm of the "thinking of reason (*Vernunftdenkens*)", which is capable of perceiving the world process as a dialectical-teleological drama of self-realisation and becoming self-aware of God. The drama is one of Fall and Salvation. God does not confront the world in a transcendent otherness, but enters into it in a kind of "Fall." He discards the world or alienates himself from it in order, after overcoming this alienation (*Entfremdung*), to return himself, thereby attaining his true perfection and godliness. This produces a kind of circular schema arising from an original, but still imperfect state (Thesis) and leading through a negatively evaluated but necessary interim state (Antithesis) to the perfect end-state (Synthesis). This scheme may also be applied to the historico-social process, where everything held to be undesirable and negative can easily be banished to the second phase (*Antithesis, Entäusserung, Entfremdung*), while what is desirable is ascribed, as "overcoming of alienation", to the third, the redeeming and crowning phase. In this way (as we shall see) both the destruction of Capitalism as well as the annihilation of the Jews in Hitler's gas chambers can be hailed as "the overcoming of alienation (*Aufhebung der Entfremdung*)."

THE DIALECTICAL AND CONCRETE thinking of "Reason" cannot be verified, much less refuted by means of the sciences of "intelligence", which have been denounced as merely abstract and formal. But as to whether, and to what extent, this higher dialectical thinking can be verified by some method—say, with dialectical means—Hegel remained as stubbornly silent as his historically most important pupil, Karl Marx. Precisely the impossibility of verification corresponds to the ultimate purpose of dialectics: i.e. with the help of this "method" to remove dogmatically preconceived convictions from any criticism as to the ostensible content of a "higher knowledge." But the fact that Dialectics is beyond verification also means that it can be manipulated at will. How can there be any means of distinguishing between a correct and an erroneous application of this supposedly higher form of thought? Hence, with its aid, any dogma whatever may be given the appearance of higher or absolute validity.



G. W. F. Hegel

Incidentally, the practically unlimited capacity of dialectics for just such manipulation had already occurred to Goethe. In a conversation (noted by Eckermann) that took place on 18 October 1827 between the Weimar poet and the Berlin philosopher, the two of them came to speak of the nature of dialectics.

"Basically", said Hegel, "it is merely a regulated, methodical cultivation of the *espirit de contradiction* (*Widerspruchsgeist*), which is an inborn gift in every man and particularly valuable for distinguishing the true from the false."

"Let us hope", interposed Goethe, "that such intellectual arts and skills are not too much misused for the purpose of turning falsehood into truth and truth into falsehood!"

"That does sometimes happen", replied Hegel, "but only with people who are mentally diseased. (*Dergleichen geschieht wohl, aber nur von Leuten die geistig krank sind.*)"[5]

Ever since then it has remained customary for dialecticians of opposing political tendencies to accuse one another of the misuse of the method and even of madness.

HOW EASY IT IS with this "method" to prove everything and the opposite of everything has not escaped critics. Thus, Wilhelm Windelband wrote of the relationship of Feuerbach's teaching to Hegel's:

> "The spectral vagueness with which the concepts of dialectical logic merged with one another made it possible with the same dialectic to construe exactly the opposite of what the master had formulated in it."[6]

In the course of history, this capacity for manipulation has emerged increasingly clearly in the realm of politics. Again and again the empty formulae of Dialectics have proved available for legitimising or combating any politico-moral demand, measure, movement or institution whatsoever. This has been known to 20th-century critics of ideologies for a long time now. For example, Hans Kelsen wrote on this subject in his book *The Political Theory of Bolshevism*, which appeared more than a quarter-of-a-century ago:

[5] See the Everyman edition of *Conversations of Goethe* (tr. Oxenford), p. 244.

[6] Wilhelm Windelband, *Die Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, Vol. II (Leipzig, 1911), p. 393.

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"Nothing can show more clearly the futility of the dialectic method than the fact that it enables Hegel to praise the state as a god, and Marx to curse it as a devil; that in applying this method the one affirms that the progressive realisation of reason, by means of war, necessarily leads to the world domination of the German Nation, whereas the other predicts, as the inevitable result of the historic evolution, the establishment, by means of revolution, of the free society of World Communism."

DIALECTICS CAN BE USED for their purposes equally by those in power and by those in opposition. The former glorify the existing system of government as the third (concluding and crowning) stage; the latter dismiss this system as the second (negative) phase that is destined to be overcome, announcing their own assumption of power as a redeeming leap into the third phase. This, too, Hans Kelsen clearly recognised:

"Any historical situation may be interpreted to represent the thesis, or the antithesis, or the synthesis, according to its political evaluation by the interpreter. Thus, the dialectical method may be satisfactory to any political creed. The fact that the dialectical method may be used for any political purpose explains its extraordinary attractiveness, its world-wide spread, comparable only to the success of the Natural-Law doctrine in the eighteenth century."[7]

With the aid of their "higher logic", that is to say Dialectics, the Marxists can talk their way out of all the contradictions that exist so plentifully both within their theory and between this theory and Soviet-Communist reality. The real function of this Dialectic is perhaps most clearly shown by one of Stalin's remarks (in the Political Report of the Central Committee at the 16th Party Congress in 1930):

"We are waiting for the withering away of the state. But at the same time we are for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the strongest and mightiest state power that ever existed. The highest development of state power in preparation of the preconditions for the withering away of state power—that is the Marxist formula. Is that 'contradictory'? Yes it is 'contradictory.' But this contradiction is inherent in life and it completely mirrors the Marxist dialectic."[8]

But this universally available method can also be applied in detail. For example, a dialectical justification was found for the fact that during the War and the post-War period the children of Soviet officials received larger rations than other children.[9] But that is a rather innocuous detail. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who himself enjoyed an education in Marxist dialectics, reports that this thought-form was used to legitimise the extortion of false confessions by means of torture and the arbitrary sentencing of innocent people. Andrey Vyshinsky, the chief prosecutor in the notorious Moscow Purge Trials (1936–38) and a theoretician of Stalinist justice, especially distinguished himself in this respect.

"Perhaps Vyshinsky, no less than his listeners, needed this ideological comfort at this time. When he cried out from the prosecutor's platform: 'Shoot them all like mad dogs!' he, at least, who was both evil and quick of mind, understood that the accused were innocent. And in all probability he and that master of Marxist dialectics, the defendant Bukharin, devoted themselves with all the greater passion to the dialectical elaboration of the judicial lie: for Bukharin it was too stupid and futile to die if he was altogether innocent (thus he *needed* to find his own guilt!): and for Vyshinsky it was more agreeable to see himself as a logician than as a plain downright scoundrel."[10]

IN THIS WAY, with the help of dialectical arguments, Marx and his heirs have laid claim to total power, ostensibly to bring about the "true society" of freedom, of plenty, of peace and happiness; but they have never ventured to say anything further about this society and the path towards it. Furthermore, where they have seized power they have subsequently been unable to keep their promises.

This is not only true of Soviet Marxism. Important aspects of the legacy of the Master of Trier have continued to exert an extremely active influence on the various neo-Marxist movements, on the "Frankfurt School" for example. Of course one could not claim that T. W. Adorno or Jürgen Habermas have personally laid any claims to dictatorial power. But one can see in their writings a clear tendency to arrogate to themselves a "higher knowledge" which is supposedly linked with the idea of insight into the nature of "true society" and necessarily inaccessible to the unenlightened gaze of ordinary scientific investigation. As Adorno put it in one of his last writings:

[7] Hans Kelsen, *The Political Theory of Bolshevism* (1948), p. 19.

[8] Joseph Stalin, *Werke*, Vol. XII (East Berlin, 1954), p. 323.

[9] S. Ossowski, *Die Klassenstruktur im sozialen Bewusstsein* (Berlin, 1962), p. 231.

[10] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* (1974), p. 101.

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"The idea of scientific truth is inseparable from that of a true society."[11]

What form such a society would take, Adorno never said, neither here nor elsewhere. Thomas Mann had already drawn his attention to this crucial point (in a letter of 30 October 1952):

"If there were just one positive word in your writings, *Verehrter*, which might provide even only an approximate vision of the true, of the proposed society! This and only this was what was also lacking from *Reflections from damaged life* [the subtitle of Adorno's *Minima Moralia*]. What is and what would be the right society? At one point you quote Lukács very approvingly, and in general much of what you write seems to point to a purified form of communism. But what will this look like? Russian despotism is misguided, but is communism conceivable without despotism? 'It's not this and it's not that. But what exactly will it be in the end?' says Michael Kramer. . . ."[12]

Adorno still had more than fifteen years to find an answer to this question, but he never gave one; and if he did find one then he took it to the grave with him. The *wahre Gesellschaft* has, therefore, remained a mystery. Confronted with the sensitive and discriminating personality of Adorno, one feels reluctant to speak here simply of bluff and swindle. But what is the appropriate word when an author asserts that he has access to special insights which are inextricably connected with knowledge of the "true society", yet stubbornly refuses or is not in a position to give any more precise details about them? In any case what we are dealing with here is the attempt to avoid responsibility for an extravagant claim through the silencing of all critical discussion. In this way a massive dogmatism is concealed under the cover of "critical theory."

In Adorno, Habermas, and other representatives of the "Frankfurt School" such dogmatism is also served by the dialectic, which is also similarly left here in a mystical twilight zone and is never described with even the modicum of clarity which is the precondition for any analytic argument. To illustrate this, here are a few of Habermas' characteristic formulations:

". . . The dialectical concept of the whole . . . transcends . . . the boundaries of formal logic, in the shadowy realm of which the dialectic itself can only appear as a chimera."

"The distinction between system and totality . . . cannot be immediately defined; because in the language of formal logic it would instantly be dissolved, and in the language of dialectics it must be preserved."

"The dialectic cannot legitimate its own value within a dimension it is on the threshold of transcending."[13]

Especially in the final example the intention of the dialectician becomes clear—to dispense with any need to substantiate his propositions to non-dialecticians. Such a position has been rightly criticised as "the classic case of an immunisation strategy."[14]

SO IT HAS BECOME more and more evident that the dialectician is availing himself of an artificial device in order to declare himself infallible. Thus, according to another critic, a dialectic of this nature is the "attempt . . . to free oneself once and for all from often uncomfortable criticism following the principles of a traditional logic by presenting the dialectic itself as a new, higher and at the same time superior logic"; but a "theory that declares itself unassailable thus renders itself uninteresting as the object of empirical and theoretical scientific investigation."[15] In reality the dialectician is not concerned with empirical or theoretical scientific problems; rather, he wants himself and others to believe that he has access to a "higher knowledge" with which extreme claims to power are often combined.

Thus a peculiar light is thrown upon the doctrine of the "non-repressive rational discourse (*herrschaftsfreien rationalen Diskussion)*" which Jürgen Habermas presents as the central condition of democratic and emancipatory thinking. It is just such a discourse which the dialectician necessarily refuses his opponent! Eduard von Hartmann, incidentally, saw that more than a century ago. The agreement on the validity of the proposition of contradiction

"is the *minimum* of common assumption, *without which no argument whatsoever*, at least no modification of falsehood, is *conceivable*. The dialectician, however, smiles at this prejudice which is after all only one of the laws of the formal logic he has thrown overboard, and consequently the essential *minimum* of common assumption is *lacking* [for a rational dispute]."[16]

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[11] Th. W. Adorno in *Der Positivismus-Streit . . . , p. 36.*

[12] Thomas Mann, *Briefe 1948–1955* (Frankfurt, 1965), p. 276.

[13] Jürgen Habermas in *Der Positivismus-Streit* . . . , pp. 155, 156, 169.

[14] R. Simon-Schaefer, *Dialektik: Kritik eines Wortgebrauchs* (1973), p. 12.

[15] G. Patzig, "Hegel's Dialectic and Lukasiewicz's Three-Valued Logic" in *History and the Past*, commemorative essays for R. Wittram (Göttingen, 1973), pp. 443–49.

[16] E. v. Hartmann, *Über die dialektische Methode* (Berlin, 1868; Darmstadt, 1963), p. 39.

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One can only kneel down in front of a dialectician and humbly accept his revelations, without ever being allowed to entertain the absurd desire to investigate and examine these revelations. It is not by chance that dialectics is the favourite child of mystagogues and dictators.[17]

In order to dispel any misunderstanding I will say once again: it is in no way my intention to impute to Jürgen Habermas any kind of personal craving for political power. But essential aspects of his teaching are supremely well-suited to a strategy which, under cover of "non-repressive and rational discourse" (impossible within the framework of the dialectic), tries to assume total power.

TO BE SURE, the pseudo-scientific character of Dialectics has not remained entirely hidden behind the Iron Curtain.

Particularly in Poland, where a strong tradition of modern scientific theory has existed ever since the inter-War period, a series of courageous thinkers after October 1956 submitted dialectical materialism in general and the dialectic in particular to a positively devastating critique employing the methods of logical analysis. If the representatives of the dialectical scholasticism were able to escape the consequences of their defeat under the protection of Party power, they had at least to make admissions over crucial points that amounted to the abandonment of central dogmas. A precise account of these events exists which, at its high points, is a positive epic of the self-assertion of scientific objectivity against the power of an institutionalised ideology.[18]

Even in the Soviet Union, at the height of the "Thaw", a professor of mathematical logic at Moscow University was able to request the abolition of the Chair for Dialectical Philosophy on the grounds that it was not concerned with any science worth taking seriously. Naturally the chair was not abolished; but the whole episode shows what, for a time, was possible even in Moscow.[19]

Alongside the path that runs from Hegel via Marx to Stalin, however, there is another one, which since 1945 has been covered over in the German Federal Republic by an impenetrable tabu—the path that leads from Hegel to Hitler.

Certainly, we cannot hold the Swabian thinker (born in Stuttgart in 1770) directly responsible for the total National Socialist régime. The totalitarian state, as a specific phenomenon of the 20th century, lay beyond his vision. But the deeper we penetrate into the matter the clearer becomes the extent to which, in my view, Hegel's dialectical ideology of the *Machtstaat* worked its way through Bismarck's empire into the thought-processes of the "Nationalist opposition" to the Weimar Republic.[20]

Soon after the First World War eminent University teachers and other influential academics began combating the liberal democracy of the Weimar Republic, in the name of Hegel's political metaphysics in general and of Dialectics in particular, calling down contempt on human rights, cleverly justifying anti-Semitism, and demanding an authoritarian state based on power, militarism and leadership as the "abolition (*Aufhebung*) of alienation."

When this state became a reality in 1933 it was decked out with all the crown jewels of this metaphysics. How far this process went may be demonstrated by a few sentences from an essay, "Idealism as a Basis for the Philosophy of the State", published by Julius Binder, one of the leading neo-Hegelian philosophers of law, in 1933:

> "We must understand the state as a reality of the spirit and can then understand it as a reality of freedom. . . . It is the will of the people, who decide upon their life-form, their existence and their reality for themselves and to this extent, as self-determining will, it is an existence of free will. As this free will the state is a reality of freedom, and to this extent a reality of morality."

From these general socio-metaphysical observations the author drew very concrete political conclusions.

> "With these remarks I have merely pursued the purpose of bringing the state we call the '*Third Reich*' closer to people's understanding, of showing them that it is not a monstrosity to be seen as

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[17] A very instructive example of the way in which dialectics can be politically manipulated is to be found in Ernst Fischer's book, *Erinnerungen und Reflexionen* (Hamburg 1969), p. 360. Here Fischer relates that he reminded the Director of the Lenin School in Moscow of a promise she had not kept.

> "Not without charm, she laughed, 'But surely you're familiar with the laws of dialectics?'
>
> 'What has dialectics got to do with not keeping a promise?'
>
> 'Oh, you're a poor dialectician. Everything depends on space and time. On reciprocal action. Several months have passed. At that time what I said corresponded to the situation. Since then the situation has changed. What was correct then is no longer correct today. Can't you understand that?'
>
> 'No.'
>
> 'I'm afraid you'll have difficulties in the future if you don't understand dialectical reciprocal action.' She looked at me mockingly, kindly and unsettling."

[18] Z. A. Jordan, *Philosophy and Ideology: The Development of Philosophy and Marxism in Poland since the Second World War* (Dordrecht, 1963).

[19] K. Marko, *Sowjethistoriker zwischen Ideologie und Wissenschaft* (Cologne, 1964), pp. 84 ff.

[20] I pointed out the facts in my essay "*Die Sozialphilosophie Hegels als Heilslehre und Herrschaftsideologie* (*Hegel's Social Philosophy as a Doctrine of Salvation and an Ideology of Domination*"). 1967; and my student Hubert Kiesewetter has since clarified this development in detail in a comprehensive study. *Von Hegel zu Hitler* (Hamburg, 1974).

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> mere force ruling over a herd of people who have lost their freedom, but that in spite of its authority, with which it demands for itself the totality of the life of its citizens, it is not unfreedom and compulsion, but freedom made real."[21]

Subsequently, not merely the rule of terror within, but also the racial laws, the policy of military expansion, and the claim of European hegemony were justified with Hegelian arguments. Even in 1944 one author was still able to write:

> "But here too the dialectic of the concrete and universal points into the future. . . . History does not represent the existence of nations merely side by side or one after the other; these nations also stand in a dialectically conceived order. Thus, just as in the concrete concept one motive force is pre-eminent, so Hegel recognises nations which, on the basis of 'geographical and anthropological existence', determine their epoch. Hegel speaks only of the domination of this nation, and there can be no doubt that for his period of the Germanic epoch he had the German people in mind. . . . This development is already outlined in reality and science in the European order as a system of leadership under the ordering might of the *Reich*."[22]

THE INTELLECTUAL justification of anti-Semitism constitutes a particularly dark chapter. For example, as early as 1926 Max Wundt, a leading historian of philosophy, bestowed metaphysical consecration on a positively furious hatred of the Jews by means of the idealist dialectic. The Jews are portrayed here as the furthermost extreme of alienation, indeed as the very force of destruction. They are "the dark power of negation that kills what it grasps. Whoever yields to them is given over to death. . . ." Finally, Wundt expressly equated them with the Devil. Because, above all since the Reformation, preservation of the spirit of Christian idealism has been entrusted to the Germans,

> "therefore the work of the Devil is particularly active among them, seeking to inhibit and suppress the effectiveness of the spirit of Christ. The Jews, who even in the Bible are called the children of Satan, are the agents of this work of disintegration."[23]

Unmistakable links run from such utterances, which were published long before the Nazi seizure of power, to what was later to become a terrible reality. Perhaps the only reason a dialectical justification was not advanced for the "Final Solution" was because, as a state secret, it was removed from public discussion. It would have been easy enough to construct such a justification from the statements about the Jews quoted above and others like them—for instance, that Jewry, as something "in itself dead" must be rendered literally dead, or that only out of "the death of Death" can life come into being. In this way even what happened in Auschwitz could have been glorified as the "overcoming of alienation."

THE OBJECTION MAY BE RAISED that all these are merely late corruptions or perversions of what were originally deep thoughts and noble motives. But precisely the most recent studies of Hegel and Marx have shown how murky were the very sources from which political Dialectics welled forth.

Thus, in the foreword to his important edition of Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of law, Karl-Heinz Ilting has cast much light on the conditions under which the printed version of the *Rechtsphilosophie* (*Philosophy of Law*) of 1820 came into being, the book upon which, above all, the ideology of the *Machtstaat* advanced by the Hegelian "Right" is supported.[24] The facts brought out by Ilting are very revealing, but the interpretation to be put upon them is different from Ilting's.

Hegel was not—as Ilting would have us believe—"liberal" or even "progressive." Nor was he really a reactionary. He was an opportunist. It is true that the philosopher had developed his ideology of the power state even while still young (as Kiesewetter also points out), but he always had a keen nose for the political situation; and when he was appointed to Berlin, he greatly modified his views to fit in with the reformist trend still dominant at that time.

But the political wind changed direction. Reaction got hold of the reins, and Hegel noted with consternation that he had mounted the wrong horse and entered a danger zone. Now, he could have tried to combine the preservation of his material existence with the preservation of his dignity and integrity as a man and a thinker. Kant did this in his clash with the reactionary minister Wöllner; and not a few of the Berlin professors who found themselves in equal peril did so too. But Hegel not merely displayed in another connection a behaviour which Schleiermacher branded as "squalid", but sought in a mixture of panic and opportunism to

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[21] Julius Binder, "Der Idealismus als Grundlage der Staatsphilosophie", *Zeitschrift fur Deutsche Kulturphilosophie I* (1935), pp. 155 ff.

[22] W. Schmidt, *Hegel und die Idee der Volksordnung* (Leipzig, 1944), p. 158.

[23] Max Wundt, *Deutsche Weltanschauung* (Munich, 1926), pp. 191-194.

[24] K.-H. Ilting (ed.), *G. W. F. Hegel, Vorlesungen über Rechtsphilosophie 1818-1831* (Stuttgart, 1973), Vol. I.

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curry favour with the new masters philosophically as well. It was a fortunate coincidence that he was just preparing his *Rechtsphilosophie* for the press. The philosopher quickly revised his manuscript and caused the dialectical rhythm of the self-realisation of the divine idea in the domain of the state to run in a way that harmonised very closely with the new dominant trends of thought. The publication of the resulting text saved him in relation to the authorities; but the reception of the book by critics and public was icy. Hegel found himself exposed as an opportunist.

This reproach was made against him in a more or less polite form from many at the time. Jakob Friedrich Fries expressed himself particularly bluntly.

> "Hegel's metaphysical mushroom did not grow in the gardens of science, but on the dung heap of sycophancy. Up to 1813 his metaphysic bowed to the French, then it became royal Wurtembergian, and now it kisses Herr von Kamptz's horsewhip."

The *Hermes* reviewer was scarcely less harsh in branding the Swabian philosopher as the prototype of political "occasionalism."

> "Such a philosophy can, of course, accommodate itself to whatever happens to be the order of the day. If liberal principles prevail in the world, this philosophy will teach them. If despotism has the upper hand, the philosophy must preach despotism. Enough, philosophers are those people who never get on bad terms with the present, who always declare to be right whatever can be put into effect and curse those who believe things could and should be different."

Hegel later made a timid attempt to counteract this devastating impression by somewhat more liberal utterances. But the *Rechtsphilosophie* in the reactionary form of its printed version of 1820 became a standard work of the anti-liberal and anti-democratic theory of the state, and it was praised as such by Carl Schmitt in 1934. Schmitt invoked Hegel as an important ancestor of the conception of the state then currently desired in the German *Reich*. In his essay "On the Three Kinds of Juridical Thinking" he openly denied his earlier teachings and advocated, with express reference to Hegel, a "thinking based on concrete order", which was to justify the system of government already established by the National Socialists. In this connection he wrote:

> "All these currents and trends of the German resistance [against the liberal 'ideas of 1789'] achieved their systematic summation in Hegel's philosophy of law and the state. In this philosophy, thinking based on concrete order comes to life with undiluted vigour."[25]

All this does not merely show up Hegel's character in a somewhat unfavourable light, but also proves that the much vaunted dialectical method was from the outset well suited—and actually employed—deceitfully to give the appearance of higher, indeed absolute, truth and validity to any political doctrines and positions chosen at a given moment for opportunist reasons. So it is that Dialectics even envelops opportunism and squalid self-seeking with the cosmic mantle of the divine idea.

THINGS ARE SOMEWHAT different, but scarcely better, with Marx. Recent studies[26] have raised basic doubts regarding the legend of the young Marx's humanism, if they have not refuted it altogether. It would appear that the lawyer's son from Trier showed at an early age a strong conviction of his Messianic mission and Caesarian claims to power, mingled with uncontrollable destructive appetites.

Scarcely any character trait of the revolutionary prophet has been so unanimously noted by observers of the most varied political complexions as his unrestrained will to power, his *Machtwille*. Particularly revealing in this connection is the letter from Lieutenant Techow, which has received far too little attention by students of Marxist literature up to now. On account of his participation in the revolution of 1848 this officer had been forced to emigrate and had come into contact with Marx. His account is written calmly and without animosity; in many places it displays unconcealed admiration; at others a note almost of regret is discernible.

During their conversation, Marx—probably urged on by his interlocutor—drank freely of strong wine and was finally "*vollständig besoffen* (completely drunk)."

"This", writes Techow, "was very welcome to me, for he became franker than he probably would have been otherwise. I gained certainty about many things that otherwise would have remained conjecture. Despite his condition, he dominated the conversation right to the end.

"He made on me an impression not only of a rare mental superiority, but also of an important personality. If he had as much heart as intelligence, as much love as hate, I would go through fire for him, despite the fact that he did not merely hint at

[25] Carl Schmitt, *Über die drei Arten des rechstwissenschaftlichen Denkens* (Hamburg, 1934), p. 45.

[26] Arnold Kunzli, *Karl Marx: eine Psychographie* (Vienna, 1966); Ernest Kux, *Die revolutionäre Konfession* (Zurich, 1967); Robert Payne, *Marx* (London, 1968); Fritz J. Raddatz, *Karl Marx* (Hamburg, 1976; London, 1979).

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his complete contempt for me on several occasions, but in the end came right out with it. He is the first and only one among us whom I would trust to rule, whom I would trust even under great circumstances not to lapse into pettiness.

"For the sake of our cause, I regret that this man does not have a noble heart to place at our disposal along with his outstanding mind. But I am convinced that the most dangerous personal ambition has eaten up everything good in him. He laughs at the fools who repeat his proletarian catechism after him, as well as at the Communists *à la* Willich or at the bourgeoisie. The only people he respects are the aristocrats, the genuine ones and those who are aristocrats consciously. In order to force them out of power he needs a strength such as he finds only in the proletarians; that is why he has modelled his system for them.

"Despite all his assurances to the contrary, perhaps precisely because of them, I have gained the impression that his personal domination is the aim of all his activities. E[ngels] and all his old associates, in spite of many attractive talents, are far below and behind him, and if they ever dare to forget this he puts them in their place with an effrontery worthy of a Napoleon."[27]

This acute characterisation is confirmed by the testimony of countless other authors. Communists and Anarchists like Moses Hess and Michael Bakunin have complained bitterly of Marx's brutally authoritarian and absolutely intolerant attitude that demanded total subservience, and from the other end of the spectrum, so to speak, comes corroboration in the secret report of a police agent dated 1853:

> "M. is jealous of his authority as head of the Party; he is vengeful and implacable towards his political rivals and opponents; he does not rest until he has brought them low; his dominant characteristic is a boundless ambition and desire for domination. In spite of the Communist equality he claims to be aiming for, he is the absolute ruler of his Party; it is true that he does everything himself, but he is also the only one to give orders and he brooks no contradiction."[28]

This claim to total power played at least an essential part in determining the revolutionary thinker's view of history and society.[29]

MARX PURLOINED the dialectical schema of self-deification from Hegel and transformed it to suit his own purposes. It is not Hegel's God who renders himself finite or "alienates himself" into the world, in order (along the path through nature and the finite spirit) finally to return to himself; it is rather working humanity that becomes alienated and reified in relation to the world of the products of its labour and comes under their power. This alienation reaches its extreme degree in the proletariat that has been totally deprived of its humanity and turned into a commodity. Then Marx appears—he knows the secret of history, recognises its dialectical laws, and thereby opens to mankind the way *via* Revolution to the elimination of Alienation and hence to the recovery of its true humanity.

In the early days, Eduard Bernstein had already perceived that this was a purely *a priori* construction. Marx, as it were, arranges the whole of human history as a gigantic display around his own person, which thereby acquires the key position of the Paraclete, the illuminator and the redeemer. At the same time, the dialectical laws of history at once lend him the highest moral justification and guarantee him ultimate success.

TO BE SURE, MARX partially filled this construction with empirical material. But at precisely the decisive points he failed to make even a serious attempt to transform it into an empirically verifiable theory, indeed he consciously or unconsciously avoided any such attempt. On the structure of the Socialist society of the future lived in by "man no longer alienated", and on the path that would lead to it, he remained almost completely silent. When Lenin, as a victorious revolutionary, came up against difficulties, he consulted Marx's writings for advice on what to do next. But he sought in vain. Everything further was improvisation.[30]

The very cornerstone of the whole conception, however, is the question of how the socio-economic dialectic is to bring about *die Aufhebung der Entfremdung*. If Marx dodges precisely this point it is bound to suggest that in reality he was not so very concerned about the overcoming of alienation. What we know about his intellectual and political development makes it seem almost certain that, for the creator of historical materialism, the idea of human liberation and human happiness was essentially a pseudo-ethical disguise for immoderate claims to domination and destructive appetites: and that he regarded the proletariat—which in any case he despised—as simply an in-

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[27] The letter was printed in the now inaccessible work by K. Vogt, *Mein Prozess gegen die Allgemeine Zeitung* (Geneva, published by the author, 1859). It is reproduced in H. M. Enzensberger (ed.), *Gespräche mit Marx und Engels* (Frankfurt, 1973), Vol. I, pp. 179 ff.

[28] Quoted in Werner Sombart, *Der proletarische Sozialismus* ("Marxismus"), Vol. I (Jena, 1924), p. 63.

[29] I have developed and explained this interpretation of Marx in my paperback, Ernst Topitsch, *Gottwerdung und Revolution* (Munich, 1973), pp. 177 ff.

[30] Cf. Robert Waelder, *Fortschritt und Revolution* (Stuttgart, 1970), p. 274, and also Melvin J. Lasky, *Utopia and Revolution* (London, 1977).

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strument of his will to power, much as Napoleon regarded his grand armies.[31]

Thus even the young Marx's conception of history and society was chiefly (if not exclusively) *eine Herrschaftsideologie*, an ideology of mastery. Its connections with the later reality of totalitarian Marxism are far closer than is generally assumed on the liberal-left today. Even many Marxist thinkers cannot shut their eyes to this insight. Thus the Yugoslav Svetozar Stojanovic writes:

> "It looks as though in future we must apply the theory of the Unconscious more extensively to revolutionary groups. The phenomena of the inversion of ends and means arouse the suspicion that from the beginning different subconscious ends underlay the conscious ends. In such cases the conscious ends, whose axis was the classless and stateless society, serve to cloak the subconscious wish for one's own absolute power."[32]

Certainly, Karl Marx's ideology of mastery achieved massive effectiveness in political reality only through the Bolshevik Revolution, the establishment of a totalitarian bureaucratic state, and its combination with the imperial demands of a "Third Rome." Certainly, terror under Stalin surpassed even that under Lenin, and at this point the Marxist intellectual tradition was reduced to an unprecedentedly primitive level and became encrusted with Byzantine rigidity. But the facts do not allow the Georgian to be made a scapegoat and held solely responsible for the "perversion" of Marxism from a gospel of emancipation to totalitarian repression. Behind the "emancipationist" disguise, even with Marx himself, an ideology of domination was the concealed guiding force.

THUS HISTORICAL OBSERVATION and theoretical analysis are in accord. The ostensibly "higher" logic or process of God's self-realisation turns out to be an imposing and reverence-inducing façade, which generally conceals certain real and thoroughly unsublime motives. Behind the Dialectic that asserts a claim to divinity there may lurk a lust for power and a delight in destruction—or the cowardice and the opportunism of those anxious to supply the power-holders of the moment with a social metaphysics in keeping with their needs or wishes.

I am aware that nowadays hardly anyone speaks of these things, in spite of the truly shattering experiences we have been through with Dialectics, particularly in the political sphere, during the last century-and-a-half and more; we still need an open discussion of this whole disastrous complex of facts. The German universities (of the "bourgeois restoration" since 1945) have done little or nothing to think through what has been experienced and suffered during the past years and to render it intellectually fruitful. The same forms of thought under whose sign important segments of the German cultured classes prepared the way for National Socialism, collaborated with it, or capitulated before it are still put on display—as if nothing had happened—as the crown jewels of speculative profundity to be approached only with the deepest reverence. It never occurred to anyone to test the scientific stability of these thought-forms, and I can assure the reader that it would have been high treason to unfold their *chronique scandaleuse*, as I have attempted here.

The mandarins of German post-War philosophy—from the pastoral representatives of a restorational, semi-theological hermeneutics to the Frankfurt armchair-Marxists—were so dependent upon Hegel's patrimony that a radical disclosure that went to the roots of these facts was bound to represent a serious threat to their own position.[33] Full of fear and bad conscience, they actually found themselves, by remaining silent and glossing over what happened, at least indirectly making common cause with the former dialectical heralds of the Third Reich.

This finally led to what can without exaggeration be described as *the* scandal of the history of ideas in post-War Germany. While diligent historical investigation cast light on the other ideological sources and entanglements of National Socialism, bringing into view even such obscure figures as the racial phantast Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, the vast complex of "Hegel and the Third Reich" remained almost entirely wrapped in protective darkness. This made it possible for Dialectics to continue to be lauded as the palladium of a democratic, emancipationist and truly enlightened way of thought and action. For those aware of the texts and contexts, of course, the supposed "dialectical enlightenment" is a mere illusion, if not worse.

Henceforth the issue is enlightenment *about* dialectics, and it is high time to put an end to the intellectual card-sharping. For once again we have to fight with our backs to the wall against an attempt to deprive us of our intellectual and political independence by means of long-outdated forms of thought. To resist this attempt is, in my view, an act of real enlightenment and emancipation.

[31] Arnold Kunzli in his "psychography" (pp. 645 ff., note 23) points out that "in his lifelong correspondence with Engels, Marx contemptuously referred to the workers as *Knoten, Straubinger, eine Bande von Eseln* (hooligans, grousers, a bunch of donkeys) and so on, which may only be the reverse side of his mythologisation. But Marx never escaped from the antithetical attitude towards the proletariat as the chosen people and a gang of hooligans. . . ."

[32] Svetozar Stojanovic, *Kritik und Zukunft des Sozialismus* (Munich, 1970), p. 182.

[33] See also Anthony Quinton's essay in ENCOUNTER, (October 1974), "Critical Theory: On 'the Frankfurt School'."

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NOTES & TOPICS

London Commentary

Dial M for Murdoch

By Edward Pearce

THE BATTERING HEADLINES about *The Times* (in other newspapers) and the tense terminal-ward bulletins, sometimes written *à la* Ivy Compton-Burnett—"A Newspaper and its Editor" —were all profoundly misleading. There was a row going on all right. Harold Evans, the Editor, and some of his staff were at odds. On other issues Mr Evans and Rupert Murdoch, the proprietor, were at odds. But none of that was really important. Newspapers may or may not, as Harold Wilson used to say, "trivialise the news", but as sure as God made little brown clichés, they trivialise newspapers. The real row is about bogus jobs and murderous costs. How will *that* develop?

On the one hand, *The Times* may by mid-April be out of the intensive care unit, with Charles Douglas-Home serene in the Editor's chair, the number of its workers reduced, the unions a little more cautious, and Mr Rupert Murdoch losing not quite as much money as before. On the other hand, the most celebrated newspaper in the whole world, a by-word for the civilisation which certain English journalists carry in their genes, may be buried beneath a cairn of long-running losses. This will be seen as a tragic indictment of the shameful failure of the government in letting it fall into the hands of an unspeakable colonial oaf who has treated a national institution like a bad debt. On the third mutant hand, it may have become a peasants' and writers' cooperative sustained by a syndicate of chic circles around Mr Peter Jay and Mr David Dimbleby and the newspaper's own journalists; a likely story!

Either way we have one certainty established, people will still be rabbiting on. There is a sort of cold wet consensus in this country, among the better sort, that Murdoch is a toneless white wog. Our gentry do truly hate him. Mr Murdoch is censured as the setter of new lows, namely the girly monosyllabic *Sun* which sells over three million, makes money, and regrettably gives the consumer an article he wishes to purchase. Attempts were made in the Commons last year to have the Trade Minister, John Biffin, prevent, as if that were the business of a minister, Mr Murdoch's takeover of *The Times*. The view was that *The Times* is just not like other newspapers. It is part of the British constitution, a prose version of the Royal Family, a sacrament to be taken every morning, a publication which angels might read if they felt equal to it. Its advertisement of a few years ago, TOP PEOPLE READ THE TIMES, said with remarkable crudity what those involved seemed truly to think.

Now perhaps it is time to say, if only in a quiet and restrained voice, that for a long time now *The Times* has been a rather mediocre newspaper, as well as a bad debt! It has virtues of course—for example a recent interview spread over two days with Mieceslaw Rakowski, the half-candid, half-duplicitous (lovely Washington word, courtesy the Secretary of State) Polish deputy Prime Minister. It was a coup. And there are other excellences, not least a chief leader writer, Geoffrey Smith, with good humour and pleasing civility.

But if we are to treat *The Times* as a newspaper like other newspapers—mortal, human, fallible as well as virtuous, certain things have to be admitted. News coverage never was very full. The transfer from gentle, dreamy don to high octane publicist (William Rees-Mogg to Harold Evans, both exceptional men) did not make it notably fuller. For if *The Times* is a cathedral its pages are, like those of a cathedral close, peopled by softly humming, heavily reiterative canons, major and minor. Special articles are long and frequently self-indulgent. It is the opposite extreme of the mistaken policy which puts features and arts coverage into obscure and furtive *laagers*. As the editor of one of our popular dailies once put it to me airily "Ye-es well, I like books . . . but I don't think we need a weekly books page if we're going to be a really lively newspaper . . . something more like a books *paragraph*."

As for its record of political judgment, like that of the British Foreign Office it has been one of violent phases, commonly wrong ones, moving from thunderous errors to ambiguous equivocation. Persons on the Left who agitate for the saving of *The Times* (and they do: Mr Jack Jones, of militant trade-union fame, is a member of that *SAVE-THE-TIMES* syndicate) might remember Geoffrey Dawson, the pre-War editor and his credo: "I try to see that nothing appears which might give offence to Herr Hitler." Members of the democratic Right and Centre might recall the power of a subsequent deputy editor, Edward Hallett Carr, to see that *The Times* treated Marshal Stalin and the Soviet Union's achievements with proper reverent discretion.

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THE PITY IS that the staff of *The Times* and their friends outside, in their complaints about Murdoch's management and Evans's editorship have been talking about the wrong things. For the issue in Gray's Inn Road as everywhere else in the London press is one of intolerable burdens of cost imposed by trade unions who have arbitrary and despotic power and whose members enjoy, at a running loss to the owners, the life-style of prospectors hitting it rich in a series of lucky strikes. Those burdens are imposed, not as a necessary means of producing something, but as hold-up money for the continued operation throughout most of Fleet Street of a system of printing which was obsolete a generation ago, one so obsolete that that kind of machinery and its spare parts are no longer manufactured!

The Times did indeed make a valiant if cack-handed attempt to introduce the new technology, and, as it is still called over here, to "buy out" the printers. This prompted a complete eleven-months' stoppage, followed by an almost total climb-down by management and a notorious attempt by a group of left-wing journalists to play at plastic militancy by demanding a wage rise after their year's paid holiday. The technology is now permissible but only in the multiple hands of the hot-metal printers. This in turn persuaded Lord Thomson to sell. Yet when Rupert Murdoch took over the shares and the annual loss of millions, questions were asked by certain Conservative Members about whether he was really and truly fit for this particular trust. It does make one despair a little.

For what is wrong with Fleet Street in general and *The Times* in particular is that our newspapers are all of them honorary members of the public sector. We are not formally nationalised. A Ministry of the Enlightenment does not yet direct our operations. But the rule which, at a price, is making British industry competitive and productive again does not apply to us. Unlike the makers of soap, the tinners of baked beans and the cost-conscious men in electronics, *we* enjoy commercial immortality. Just like the National Health Service, like the Town Halls with their mendicant pilgrimage of administrators, we are not going to go bust. Individual owners can and will stagger back out of newspaper proprietorship licking their wounds and clutching their office blocks. But the overmanned printers and the overmanned Saturday night casual helpers and the overmanned clerical staff, all on knee-high velvet, act in the knowledge that another aspirant moved by vanity, desire to do a good turn for the public interest, the delusion that he can manage where no one has managed for three decades, will be waiting . . . at the head of a queue.

Murdoch, the cad from Adelaide, was the last

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best hope that somebody might actually close a newspaper *pour encourager les autres*. He won't. He began with a deep rumble demanding 600 redundancies and threatening closure on Monday. He hasn't got them. Monday was months ago. He will settle for a token handful, and *The Times* will carry blithely on, the British upper-class smirk wedded to the Neapolitan corruption of its operatives; and something which parodies the worst in all of us will remain more or less unchanged.

Fleet Street proprietors, hapless, powerless men, do very little direct hiring on the manual side. The trade unions do that. The wages for employees and casual helpers long dead and gone are made out to "Mickey Mouse" and "Dan Dare" and then split up among the employees, some of whom may even have been working that day. The Inland Revenue, as unlucky in this as with the grander practitioners of rapacity, has given up pursuing this fraud. A shrewd economist once remarked that the Fleet Street workers were paid not wages but rent. They own a chunk of Fleet Street territory: if you want to use, you pay. So it is that Linotype operators are paid more than editors.

If *The Times*, even if it were a better newspaper, were to fall into the river Thames and all employment on it were to end, many in Fleet Street would take it to be the best news since movable type. But it won't happen. We are wedded to a cycle of loss, aspiration, and loss which should be the death of us. But then we are an unconscionable time a-dying. Instead of clutching at a *status quo* which is corrupt, uneconomic, and which sustains all our grievous defects, we should be preparing for a drastic uprooting of the entire newspaper trade (sometimes mistakenly called an industry).

IS THERE a conceivable scenario? Suppose that *The Times* and all the rest of us did close. Suppose that the technology which was new 20 years or so ago was universally instated with just as many workers as it takes to run it, that we set up facsimile stations all over Britain from West Wales to East Anglia, from the Highlands to Littlehampton, what could we not then do? Instead of the deadline being pushed forward ever earlier as it has been by the print unions until we are spiked on the late newscasts, we could be re-making front pages with early morning news off the tapes. A newsman would be setting his own copy—this picture is something still dreamed about in Britain—and transmitting to facsimile stations in Norwich and Cardiff from which delivery would be local and immediate, instead of being the early despatched, laborious national burden of limping strike-bound British Rail. With printing split into many centres and with a later deadline, most of the Metropolitan power to blackmail would be gone; but so, of course, would most of the Fleet Street printers whose absence from the ranks of the redundant is its own peculiar tragedy. We would be dealing with provincial printers (like, say, if I may get personal, the excellent and efficient producers of ENCOUNTER, which hasn't missed a publication date in 30 years). And Britain's provincial printers are a world and a civilisation apart from the neo-Luddite conspiracy of the Fleet Street bandits. We would no longer have a "ghost shift", no surplus of men signing on and disappearing into the morning. Local carriers with their smaller catchment area would ensure the delivery which at present is not ensured. What, then, keeps us back in the moat-and-drawbridge era of printing and publishing? Not mere traditional sentiment. Outside observers should not get the impression that our British managements are like Thomas Love Peacock's Mr Chainmail who could imagine no higher or better time than the good old Twelfth Century. . . .

LIKE those 19th-century Turkish reformers looking at Cavour's Italy, or Bismarck's Germany, they too dream of what might be. They are held back, partly because the unions' brute methods have to some extent demoralised them and created a losing-side psychology, partly because the initial capital investment for reform would be very high. And part of that investment is the cost of paying off scores of thousands of pounds to each of hundreds of non-functioning operatives. The price of buying out the poker tables at the back of the shop is horrible. Rupert Murdoch, initially, had the keenest of ideas—separate the titles from the rest of the company, go into voluntary liquidation, and immorally avoid paying what morally ought not to be paid anyway. Parliament squealed; the Trade Minister seems to have leaned on Murdoch through the Board of Public Interest directors, whom Murdoch had to accept as the price of ever starting at *The Times*; and so all was aborted. Murdoch will have to settle, if settle he does, for token redundancies and real losses.

PARLIAMENT and Government, because they are under the anti-economic delusion that *The Times* is a shrine, have reinforced the power of the Temple maidens who guard it. They have thick-headedly obstructed the one chance that a hole might be opened up through which we might all escape to solvency (and to use our freedom-of-the-press to produce rather better newspapers). While I am not an admiring reader of *The Times*, finding it, as I say, heavy-toned, self-indulgent and afflicted with

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conceit, I do rather think (and hope) that if it were to die it might well have just those powers of resurrection which are appropriate to its own God-like status.

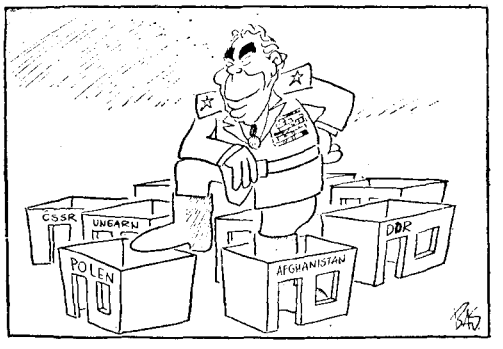
But if *The Times* and its competitors are denied resurrection we shall stagger on in the condition of Swift's Struldbrugs. Already the British popular press has turned in despair to daily games of Bingo to enhance its revenue, turning croupier in response to a protection racket (instead of, as usual, gambling coming first and extortion later). Will *The Times* perhaps take up cash-rewarded contract bridge? Top prizes for top chess manoeuvres?

Do we deserve to survive? Good journalism is still being produced in Britain, but in the climate of Saturn (acid rain and all). The climate debilitates and weakens. We get by, thinking less of what goes on and what goes in and more of whether we can go on at all, and whether we can get far enough "down market" with magazines disguised as newspapers plus canned agency reprints. If the species of foreign correspondent is dying out it is because costs are ruthlessly cut everywhere but on the shopfloor and upon the compulsory listed antiquities to be found there.

Ironically, one of those who protested most when Rupert Murdoch came to *The Times* was a Tory back-bencher, Jonathan Aitken. Ironically, because it was Jonathan's grandfather, the unforgettable old druid, Lord Beaverbrook (Max Aitken), who, in the faraway days when newspapers were profitable, by bribing the printers with money over their own wilder aspirations, hoped to smash the competition. In the process he turned Fleet Street into a cripple. Beaverbrook has some claim to be the Godfather of the "ghost shift", the initiator of our present condition of warm, comfortable, roll-along catastrophe. One wouldn't want some beastly Australian disturbing that part of our national heritage, would we?

A Phoenix Out of the Polish Ashes?

A Czech Reformer's Views—By ZDENEK MLYNAR



ZDENEK MLYNAR *is perhaps the highest-ranking Communist functionary of Eastern Europe who has gone into Western exile. He was a member of the Czechoslovak Politburo and secretary of the Central Committee in the Dubcek period, and was in the delegation which was ordered to Moscow. From Prague he tried to influence the East German Communists (Honecker) as well as those in the West (Berlinguer). He joined the "Charta 77" movement. Having lost all his jobs (including his last little post in the National Museum), he fled to Austria. His book "Night-Frost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism" was published in 1980 by C. Hurst & Co. He lives today as a writer in Vienna.*

ARE THERE, can there be, any illusions left in Poland? Surely nobody, not even General Jaruzelski, can possibly believe that the present crisis, with its deep social and political roots, could somehow be solved with the "emergency" measures of a military dictatorship. So it is only to be expected that the representatives of martial law should speak of their intention "to continue the reforms. . . ." Their words would have one believe that the military government is "only a temporary measure." After that would come "a normalisation of the situation."

I would even be tempted to believe that all this is said with a certain amount of desperate sincerity. Whoever it is who will be carrying the burden of power after the end of the martial law (and who really cares about the names), a practical way forward will have to be found. In all probability there will be an attempt to move directly, or indirectly, towards some Polish variant of so-called "Kadarisation", i.e. the imitation of the Hungarian model (which Janos Kadar has developed over the last 25 years since the Soviet intervention of 1956), in order to defuse internal tensions and establish a manageable consensus with the population. But the question remains: Is a process of "Kadarisation" possible in Poland?

Consider what happened in Czechoslovakia. The leadership of the Communist Party entertained similar objectives after the events of August

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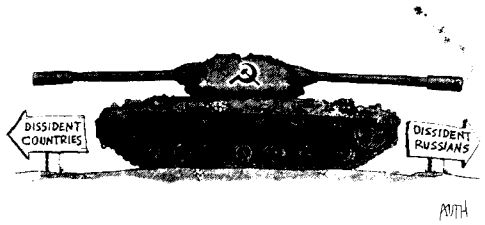
1968—and fulfilled none. When Gustav Husak succeeded the helpless and hopeless Alexander Dubcek in April 1969, he didn't really think that he was going to preside over the kind of régime which is Czechoslovakia today. He wanted to be a Czechoslovak Kadar. But he failed. And I am afraid that Jaruzelski and the other comrades who might come to power after the end of martial law will be no more successful. My fears are that not only will they not be "Kadars", they will not even be "Husaks." Unlike the old proverb, the more things change, the more different things are.

Hungary in the revolutionary (and counter-revolutionary) year of 1956 was by no means on the edge of economic ruin. There was a certain normal balance between agriculture and industry, and what aid came from the USSR managed to help avoid serious crises. In the 1960s Moscow, in accordance with its own "new course", allowed some reformist changes in the economic system. Politically too there was a favourable atmosphere for Kadar, as Nikita Khrushchev tended to support a number of moderate measures in the direction of "de-Stalinisation." To be sure, the presence of the Red Army was enough to suppress the national revolution and to silence all political opposition, but there was no attempt to restore the old Stalinism. Hungary imported from the Kremlin a mild form of Khruschevism. Kadar's real achievement consisted in using all these elements in the situation of the day to develop a new variant of a Soviet-type régime: it was a shrewd exercise in "the art of the

A University under



"TWO DAYS *and two nights have elapsed since the event you know about. We woke up to find all telephone links had been cut. There was no way of making local calls and it was impossible to telephone to other towns. There was terrible confusion. Uniformed television newsreaders continually repeated the same communiqués. Civil liberties have been suppressed. Some news reached us in the morning. Several people have been 'interned.' At one o'clock in the morning, following the best tradition established by our neighbours, police ransacked the Solidarity offices and arrested everyone they found on the premises. It is —8°C. They were not allowed to their coats—exceptional brutality. At the same time people who had been active in the Solidarity movement are dragged from their beds by special squads.*

"ALWAYS THE SAME SCENE over and over again: the door is forced in, broken down, tear gas, beating with truncheons and bare fists, terrified children screaming as the father of the family is dragged away barefoot to the car waiting below. It's all over in a minute. The neighbours woken by the shouting rush to the door in time to see the car disappearing around the corner.

"IT IS IMPOSSIBLE *to draw up an accurate list of victims. The first pieces of information we could piece together on Sunday morning put the number around 40. One professor was abducted from his home in the middle of the night while his wife was away. Their six children, the youngest aged two, were left alone in the flat with the door broken down. His wife told me her husband had time to put on a shirt and a pair of trousers over his pyjamas, but was forced to leave without shoes. She ran after her husband with his shoes, but was pushed back. The commander of the militia told her to make up a parcel with her husband's clothes and leave it at the university. A militiaman would collect it. So far, no one has been.*

"In the rector's office, in the university library and in the student hostels a number of groups consisting of about a dozen people barricaded themselves in, taking food and airbeds. The militia did not intervene because its forces were in action in the large factories which were also barricaded.

"NEWS *of what is happening in the town was passed on by word of mouth. There are rumours of a clash at the truck factory. Some Solidarity militants have taken refuge in a factory in the suburbs. They are urging people to strike, but the few leaflets they produce rarely reach the town. Despite the ban, crowds gather silent and threatening in front of the ransacked offices of our regional Solidarity branch. There are no private cars on the streets because there is no petrol. Supplies are in chaos. Nothing unusual in that. We have to walk miles to meet friends, get information, exchange views and make plans.*

"GENERAL ADVICE: don't sleep at home, or report for work, classes are cancelled. The rectors went to see the commander to protest against the arrests of university lecturers. They were arrested on the spot. After three hours they are released and call a meeting of Senate (all this when telephones are not working). Senate meets. Negotiations with the strikers. They draft a protest which is signed by the entire student body and ancillary staff, but the strike will end.

"There was little choice because the militia were on their way. People dispersed. But in the student hostels there was no time to get away. Baton charges, arrests and destruction. Tensions were running high. The wife of a professor who was also arrested in the middle of the night broke down. She ran out shouting: 'Our best people have been taken—at least try to save the young ones.' The first signs of considered

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possible."

In the year 1968 the Czechoslovak point of departure was much more unfavourable. Husak did not become a Kadar, and not merely because he was quite a different kind of person and character; there were other objective reasons. Quite a different wind was blowing from Moscow in 1956. This time the Soviet invaders did not bring anything like Khrushchev's reformism, but rather its negation: Brezhnev's "Real-socialism", the purpose of which was to subjugate the Czechoslovakian satellite completely within the Soviet imperial area and, more than that, to stifle any sign of a "democratic heresy."

Nevertheless, one significant advantage lay with the Czechoslovaks, for their economy (like Hungary's in 1956) was still in a manageable state. In point of fact the year 1968 was marked by a measure of growth and expansion; the earlier economic reforms had a positive effect, and there were significant results from the investment programme. As a consequence the "normalisation"—which, of course, meant the restoration of a totalitarian régime of the Soviet type—could in the next seven years or so base itself on relatively successful economic activities and a fairly decent (by Eastern measuring-rods) living standard for the people. The mechanisms of a "consumer society" reinforced the stability, and all taken together it constituted a kind of "social contract" between the CP and the people, which meant "normalisation" for the Prague régime; everybody worked harder, got some rewards, and was left (most of them) with a certain privacy.

HOW DOES any of this compare with the Polish situation of 1982? Very badly indeed. Poland is confronted with neither the Hungarian nor the Czechoslovak possibility of "normalisation." For the first there is not the political base, and for both no economic foundation. The bankruptcy of the economy is the essential handicap, although the post-*Solidarity* post-Gierek-&-Kania politics are also an unthinkable point of departure of anything resembling "Kadarisation."

Brezhnev's Kremlin, it is clear, has been confronted in Poland with a far greater danger than it ever had in the Prague Spring of 1968.[1] In the first place Poland does constitute, after all, the second largest Eastern-Bloc state, with the second largest military force (and one which borders on Germany). Then, too, one should not underestimate the traditional, historical fear of the Russians in the face of Polish resistance. More than that, the world-wide situation has placed different shadows on the picture: in 1968 there was no Afghanistan adventure, and there was a crestfallen Democrat named Johnson in the White House, not a confident Republican named Reagan; the neuralgic points on the strategic globe were far fewer; there was less of a "critical" atmosphere at home. In the earlier period Brezhnev could, despite the Prague events, look forward to the continuation of a *Détente* period of "relaxation", and could with a certain justification assume that the West, despite the shock of 21 August 1968, would take it as a passing accident and continue on the path of "Co-Existence."

Thus, the consequences for Poland in the light of what I have been trying to describe are fundamentally new and different. As I see it, the basic importance of the military dictatorship lies in the

[1] See Ota Filip, "The Difference between Warsaw & Prague", ENCOUNTER, November 1981.

Martial Law

reaction are appearing. You can take a nation by surprise, but you can't break its spirit or bring it to its knees.

"ALL THE BIG FACTORIES *have been barricaded. The militia has them surrounded and launches an attack every few hours. Series of explosions, smashed windows. No casualties so far. But there again, who knows? Ambulance sirens can be heard everywhere. In civilian hospitals all patients fit to be moved are being sent home at no notice. To make room for whom? There's a ban on the sale of dressings in chemists.*

"I HAVE SEEN some students with bruises and swollen faces. Forty or so escaped and rejoined the workers in one of the barricaded factories. The students are very brave, and not only the men. Exhausted by the occupation which has lasted two to three weeks in universities and polytechnics, and in secondary schools as well. Extremely well organised, responsible, dignified and tenacious. Most of the teachers, myself included, were helping them day and night. Not only by being there. Everyone did what they could. I helped to organise food and classes.

"YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN *the young people listening to a lecture and heard the discussion that followed. They are very mature and very determined—an example to us all. The university authorities were unanimous in their support of the strike. We wanted to get a new law passed on higher education without any modifications or amendments from the Ministry. We also wanted the dismissal of a rector who had been imposed on us, a former colonel. Since the 13th we have had rector-commissars.*

"I'll stop here. You have my permission to make known the contents of this letter, but don't reveal my name or my course. Try to help us."

Letter from Poland
to Birkbeck College, London
in TIMES HIGHER EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

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Sunday Telegraph

fact that, unlike anything that has transpired since 1956, the Soviet power can in Poland only maintain itself with a programme of political intimidation and mass terror. With the declaration of martial law the Polish Communist Party has exposed its own incompetency and ineffectiveness, its incapacity to conduct any kind of dialogue with its own people, especially when any move towards some compromise solution once again threatens it with losing all control over the society. It had to turn to force and violence, and only on that basis can it hold on to power; today as well as tomorrow it will require total, one-hundred-percent controls. All the current promises, and all future offers of "continuing the reforms", have to be discounted in this context. If there are to be changes, reforms, different ways of doing things, it will not be executed through any kind of political compromise but only on the basis of the total restoration of complete Communist sovereignty. If I may be permitted to put it another way, after 13 December 1981 any species of change or amelioration in the society will be something like a change of rules and regulations in a penitentiary, and nothing like a movement towards a different, more enlightened, communal order, "with a human face."

After all, who will be the "normalisers" after the promised termination of martial law and the military dictatorship? Not the stalwart fellows now sitting in the so-called Internment Camps. Nor the confused indecisive comrades in the Party who for some 16 months tried to make deals and arrangements with the popular opposition. The only cadres left are those who from the very beginning argued for police methods and a drastic solution by force and violence. Some "normalcy."

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, the more the differences accumulate. What was once seen as mere radicalism is now held to be crimes for the subversion of the state. The old moderate reformers are now stamped as dangerous radicals. Only a so-called "centrism" is considered to be the visible alternative to the present hard position of the Junta, and only yesterday it was seen as a blind conservatism which had to be discarded. There is almost nothing left of the perspective of "liberality", with which one had hoped to "prevent the worst from happening." To be tolerated at all one has to fall conspicuously into line and offer unquestioning support to the re-established régime. Even that most remarkable of all autonomous forces in post-War Poland, the Catholic Church, can in the present situation maintain its independence only by making more and more concessions to the ruling power.

Alas, no phoenix will arise out of these ashes, no hope for some moderate post-military reform movement. To expect anything of that sort would, in my view, be just too naive.

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A Special Book Section

Stage & Screen

The Fatality of Hatred

On John Osborne—By BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

DEEP IN MY PRIVATE archives is a picture postcard showing a chubby tot carrying his or her (the sex is unclear) variegated baggage to a bright yellow car, beneath which is the slogan, "*I'd go anywhere for you, dear!*" Turn it over, and the message becomes still more curious. At the top are the initials B.P.M., followed by "Brigade HQ, summer campaign." And then comes the anonymous message: "Might be healthier to keep out of town—esp downtown Chichester. Better warn Fatso Morley, too. It's either you or him to sing first." The dilemma facing me in May 1978, when I received the card, was this. Should I hand it over to the local police, or keep it in hopes of one day selling it to the British Museum? To what did I owe the prior loyalty—to my own safety, or to posterity, which might like documentary evidence of what a very funny fellow the esteemed author of *Look Back in Anger* eventually became?

I took the more courageous decision, not altogether without misgivings. Hadn't John Osborne, whose identity I convinced myself the postcard coyly concealed, announced publicly that when his British Playwrights' Mafia became operational he would personally make himself responsible for beating up me? Wasn't he, well, rather a burly sort of chap? And hadn't there been another hint that he meant what he said—a foot stuck out, as if to trip me, as I bounced past him down the aisle of the Olivier Theatre? About this point I got it into my head that the crazed playsmith planned some kind of ritual humiliation for me, and I began to plot my countermoves. Suppose he really were to sally out from behind a pillar at the Old Vic, and boot me in the buttocks. The coolest, deadliest riposte, I decided, would be to swivel round and plaster him in the chops with a meringue, custard pie, or similar piece of silent-movie weaponry. Accordingly, I bought a very creamy confection at my local bakers, and planted it, ready for use, in my mackintosh pocket. It stayed there for some weeks, evolving interestingly in texture and hue; and nothing, nothing at all happened. Perhaps the old monster's ruse had all along been to lure me into ruining a perfectly good mackintosh. If so, he spectacularly succeeded. I am still awaiting a more direct attack, as, I believe, is Sheridan ("Fatso") Morley.

This is a silly story, not the sort one expects at the beginning of a responsible account of the work of an allegedly "major" dramatist. But it does have some point. For many of us, Osborne was the writer who most memorably and importantly voiced our inarticulate frustrations and resentments, our fears and nervous hopes, as we first became conscious of ourselves and our context. Ronald Bryden, reviewing *Inadmissible Evidence* and remembering *Look Back in Anger*, called him "the voice of my generation"; and I myself, though several years younger, felt the same sense of exhilarated identity when I came as a spotty adolescent to hear Jimmy Porter ebulliently rip into, so it seemed, everything and everyone I dimly despised. I went back to school—a cloning-lab, if ever there was one, for Jimmy's brother-in-law Nigel, the bowler-hatted "platitude from outer space"—earnestly convinced that neither in life nor in the theatre could things be quite the same again. I was right, too, at least as far as the theatre was concerned.

To be sure, *Anger* was in some ways as improbably a candidate for *fons et origo* of a theatrical renaissance as T. W. Robertson's *Caste* had been a century earlier. It was, as Osborne himself conceded, technically "a formal, rather old-fashioned piece", and the plot involved the hoariest of subjects, a misalliance and the eternal triangle. Upper-middle-class Alison shares an uncomfort-

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able room and a still more uncomfortable marriage with Jimmy, who comes "from working people." Her actress friend, Helena, persuades her to leave the abominable parvenu, only to fall into his arms and bed herself. Alison has a miscarriage, and returns to Jimmy, whom Helena nobly renounces: "When I saw you stand there tonight, I knew it was all utterly wrong."

Osborne's debt to the tradition of the "well-made play" is obvious everywhere, but perhaps particularly in the calculated curtains that end several scenes: Helena strikes Jimmy, sees the anguish in his face, then passionately kisses him; Alison unexpectedly returns and Jimmy exits, snapping "friend of yours" at Helena; and, last of all, there's reconciliation that even the play's most enthusiastic supporter, Kenneth Tynan, found marked by "painful whimsy."

SO ONE MIGHT GO ON, noting the woodenness of the supporting characters; and yet, of course, the account is an entirely inadequate one. It ignores the originality and impact of Jimmy himself, the extent to which he seemed at once exceptional and representative. He was clearly too idiosyncratic to be easily regarded as the spokesman of any group or faction, yet his very idiosyncrasy and oddity encouraged those who felt out of joint with the times to identify with him. He wasn't simply Osborne's social or political loudhailer, yet many of his comments on his environment seemed pertinent to those of his peers who, for one reason or another, shared his confusion, ennui, impotent rage, and feelings of desperate defeatism. His most celebrated line, "There aren't any good brave causes left", was manifestly untrue. What of CND, Oxfam, British colonialism, about to stage a sensational revival at Suez, or the Russian oppression of Eastern Europe, soon to show its ugliest face in Hungary? And didn't Jimmy himself find the British class and caste system especially noxious, and clearly think social change overdue?

No, the line patently reflected his own inadequacies, and perhaps was, as Osborne himself suggested, "the sound of ordinary despair." And yet its very fame suggests that it did also touch some more general nerve among the disaffected young of the day. Jimmy was, in Tynan's words, "the completest young pup in our literature since Hamlet Prince of Denmark", and left us thinking not only about his contradictions of character but about the nature of the English Elsinore that had helped make him the lost, vindictive, defiant creature he was: a vivid, sympathetic case-study, with sociopolitical reverberations unique in the British theatre of 1956.

John Arden has said that *Look Back in Anger* supplied the theatre with "passion and contemporary relevance" at a time when their absence was no longer even noticed; and Tom Stoppard has doubted whether he would have become a playwright at all, had it not been for the excitement Osborne's play generated, the feeling it created that the drama was "the place to be at." It did much to resuscitate a comatose British theatre, increasing the sweep of its subject-matter and, hence, of its audience appeal; and, in spite of ups and downs, the patient's heart, brain and lungs have been firing more or less satisfactorily ever since. Yet what has happened to the man responsible for that feat? Here he is, playing cowboys and Indians, cops and robbers, playwrights and critics, or whatever the game is, with his supposed enemies; here he is, proclaiming it a patriotic duty to misdirect the foreign tourists allegedly cluttering our pristine streets. Off the stage, and to a large extent on it, the battling dramatist has transformed himself into a puny blimp—and the obvious question is, why? Have his brains been turned by the strain of living up to his own legend? Or is there something more deeply lacking in his character? Perhaps the first episode of his autobiography[1] may have a clue or two to offer.

SINCE IT COMES to an end immediately before George Devine accepted *Anger* for performance at the Royal Court, the book does not contain a great deal of obvious and overt interest to the dramatic historian. However, it gives some indication of which parts of *Epitaph for George Dillon*, the play written in collaboration with Anthony Creighton in the early 1950s, were by Osborne himself. It also makes clear that Alison and Jimmy's awkward courtship, as well as some of their troubled life together, was based on Osborne's relationship with Pamela Lane, the actress who became the first of his five wives. Mother and father Lane were, he tells us, further down the social scale than Alison's parents—"firmly entrenched in trade for generations, and all the family had Wurzel-Somerset accents." But they were obviously equally appalled by their aspiring son-in-law, then a down-market matinée idol in rep at Bridgwater, and they, too, hired a private detective, in hopes of unearthing something disreputable about him. The wedding service itself—"Mummy slumped over her pew in a heap, the noble female rhino, poleaxed at last"—also seems to have been similar to that of Alison and Jimmy. Later, however, things became rather different. So far from the young wife crawling back in apologetic tears to the husband she's

[1] *A Better Class of Person*. By JOHN OSBORNE. Faber, £7.95; Dutton, $13.75.

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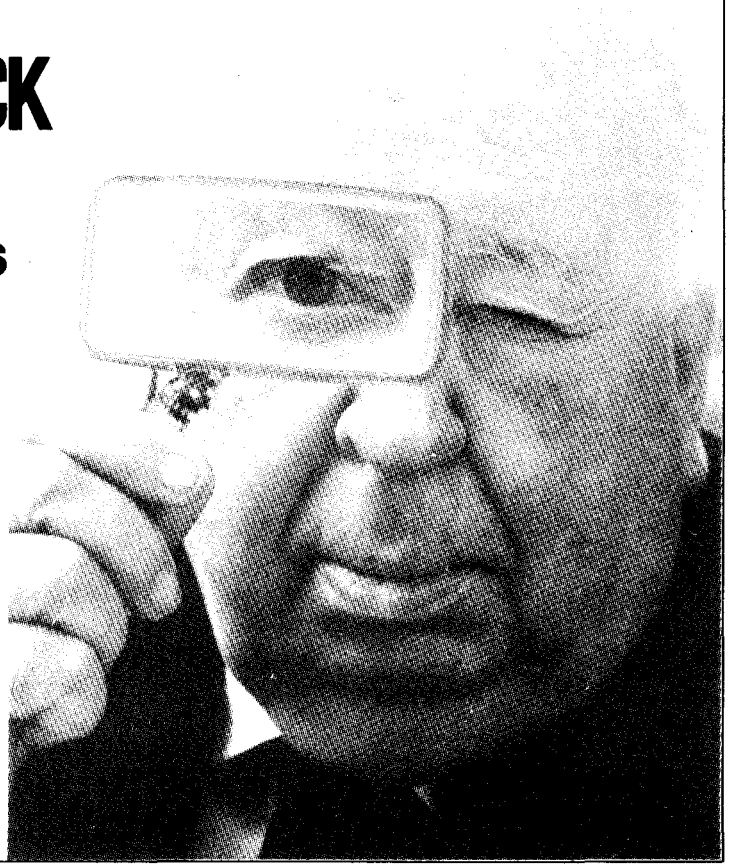
The Murderous Gaze

William Rothman



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deserted, which is the situation at the end of *Anger*, Pamela became rather successful as a provincial actress and eventually left Osborne for a wealthy dentist. The "Dear John" letter she wrote at the time—"I shall always have a deep loving need of you"—is nevertheless replicated word for word in *Look Back in Anger*.

The real interest of Osborne's autobiography is what it tells us about his formative years, or, rather, what it tells us he felt about them. Imagine the world of Edward Bond's *Saved* raised a notch or two in the social scale, combine it with that of Orton's *Entertaining Mr Sloane*—and, no, you still haven't quite got that lower-middle-class London desert, with its charmless parlours and loveless relationships, its relentlessly, irredeemably low moral and emotional horizons.

It is hard to say which of Osborne's large family was the most oppressive to the spirit. Maybe his paternal grandmother, with her thin smile and the contempt she seems to have reserved for her son, whom she never forgave for succumbing at sea to the tuberculosis that eventually killed him and thus running up heavy hospital bills in Lisbon. When he died, he was found to have been inveigled into signing a deed of gift, leaving her precisely the amount he then cost her. Or maybe the worst was his everlastingly complaining Aunt Queenie, who married a homosexual and tried to get the local police to arrest him when he continued to correspond with his "friend."

Actually, there is no doubt in Osborne's own mind who was the deadliest of these querulous, carping, mingy-minded people, with their long hurt silences and climactic rows at Christmas. It is his mother, a barmaid who preferred to call herself a "licensed victualler's assistant", and mistress of the humiliating put-down and what he calls the "Black Look." He talks of her "snarling, raw-nailed boredom and dissatisfaction", her tendency to see spontaneity as a sort of "bad breath", and her habit of regarding affection or friendship "as a system of rewards, blackmail, calculation and aggrandisement"—"nothing", he goes on, "ever strikes me with such despair as the truly cold heart. It disarms utterly and never ceases to do so." A key memory is evidently his mother's irritable, self-pitying behaviour at and after the death of his advertising-copywriter father, whom he adored. As the nine-year-old Osborne looked down at the corpse, she said "This room's got to be fumigated", pronouncing the last word "frumigated." "For the first time", he reports, "I felt the fatality of hatred."

Unsurprisingly, he became a chronic bedwetter, and grew into a sickly, scrofulous, unhappy and unappetising adolescent. For a particularly agonising period he was incarcerated in a convalescent home remarkably like Dotheboys Hall; later, he went to a minor, a very minor, public school, only to be expelled for punching the headmaster. By the time he went professionally on the stage, becoming a sometime actor in a series of unusually ratty reps, his character would appear to have been formed. At any rate, the picture we're given is of a young man of strong likes and (and more often) dislikes, capable of passion but also, as he himself wryly recognises, of a disconcerting pettiness; a dedicated rebel, though mainly in the sense of not hesitating to make himself objectionable to the dull, drab or conventional. Interestingly, he seems to be without social or political convictions.

IT IS ALWAYS presumptuous to put a writer on the psychiatrist's couch on the basis of his work, even if that work includes an autobiography; but, in so far as it is possible in Osborne's case, we may, I think, conclude that his family, and especially his mother, did much to define him both positively and negatively. His upbringing presumably helps explain his work's insistence on the primacy of emotion, the idea that we must keep caring, keep responding, or die. He once said that his aim as a writer was to give "lessons in feeling", meaning in love, friendship, outrage, hate and, perhaps, despair; and from the time of Jimmy Porter, who incessantly makes it plain that a sentient war is to be preferred to a moribund peace, to that of Ben and Sally Prosser, the acrimonious yet loving couple at the heart of *Watch It Come Down*, he has attempted to do precisely that. And, at least in the early days, the public enthusiasm for his work suggests he substantially succeeded, too.

But from the start, or at least from the time of his first failure, *The World of Paul Slickey*, it was apparent that his strength was also his limitation; and the passing years have made his weaknesses the clearer. Bluntly, he lacks mind, meaning both the organising and the appraising intellect. He has always tended to allow a single character, one in conflict with apathy, triviality, stupidity, cupidity, or some other manifestation of an uncaring society, to dominate the proceedings and shape what, for want of a better word, we'll call the plot. In recent years, however, both character and plot have become thinly camouflaged excuses for Osborne to propagate his feelings about and to the world.

This might not matter if those feelings were arresting in themselves, or were at least the result of sharp observation and analysis. But even those who were his warmest admirers of yore find it difficult to make any such claim. He seems to have meant it when, a few years back, he announced he would "Fling down a few statements—you can take your pick", and promised those statements would be "sweeping." He seems also to have meant it when he said that "one prejudice is worth twenty principles", and that he would like "to see the

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whole hideous, headlong rush into the 20th century halted a bit." Increasingly, his "drama" has consisted of using thinly realised characters to offer unsubstantiated opinions about the state of Britain from a stance that one can call nostalgic, reactionary or blimpish, depending on one's own convictions and charity.

Take Pamela, the actress-heroine of *Time Present*. She admittedly has a generosity that counteracts what would otherwise be unrelieved bitchiness, and gives her some solidity as a character; but her identity is mainly rhetorical, her function to be a blend of sentimental obituary and searing editorial. For her father, a thespian of the old school dying offstage, she has the respect Osborne's people all seem to share when they look back towards the Edwardian era; for those around her, little but distaste. Her verbal hit-list becomes positively encyclopaedic: hippies, drugs, boutiques, trendy clothes, swinging London, underground papers and bookshops, Viet Nam protesters, women novelists and biographers, women politicians, the Labour Party, the nation's technological pretensions, committed actresses, "faggots" and "pooves", Americans, American drama, modern poetry, and, of course, the critics, with their "frigid little minds."

THIS LIST is expanded by subsequent plays, perhaps most contentiously by *A Sense of Detachment*, at once a desultory satire on avant-garde theatre and an exploitation of its techniques. What, after all, is proved by juxtaposing snippets from Shakespeare, Yeats and other poets with extracts from modern pornography? That our generation uniquely lacks the capacity to love? This idea comes to the surface when a character goes on to denounce technological innovation, industrial progress and economic union: "People don't fall in love: that idea is no longer effective in the context of modern techniques." The interesting questions, of course, are why people need porn and whether the Common Market will alter the British way of life for the better or worse; but Osborne's puppets are not there to explore and argue, rather to buttonhole and pronounce on his behalf.

What makes this still more maddening is his fondness for dividing the world into Us, who for all our faults safeguard honest feeling and decent values, and Them, the enemies of such things. This is so in *West of Suez*, at the end of which an eminent writer, centre of a group of expatriate English, is first harangued by an American yippie who conveniently incarnates much that Osborne finds mindless in the young, and is then killed by rampaging blacks. "They've shot the fox", incants someone over his body, implying, with scant justification, that all that is cultivated and honourable has been desecrated. The tendency is still more marked in *Watch It Come Down*, at whose end a commune of writers and artists is assailed by country "yobbos." "We all, *the few of us*, need one another", wails Sally Prosser over the dying Ben. The italics are Osborne's; but nothing he has shown, as opposed to declared, proves that this is a cultural élite worth conserving or that those outside are as malevolently philistine as we're meant to believe.

This was in 1976, and Osborne has written no play since, which may be just as well. His most recent work represents the victory of vague feeling over hard thought, impression over observation, notion over idea, prejudice over conviction, paranoia over anger, clutter over art, and, just conceivably, his mother over himself. He has, one feels, reacted violently and often usefully against her. Yet something of her temperament continues to fester inside him, as he himself seems ruefully to recognise. At any rate, his autobiography contains suggestive extracts from his writer's notebooks, including this: "I am ashamed of her as part of myself that can't be cast out, my own conflict, the disease which I suffer and have inherited, what I *am* and never could be whole. My disease, an invitation to my sick room."

Something of that "disease" is surely there in his quick contempts, his instinctive and sometimes barely rational distastes, and the mean-mindedness with which he is capable of expressing them. He punishes the mistress who has rejected him by turning on all the electricity in her flat and leaving the door and windows unlocked, to make burglary the easier. He takes, and has clearly retained to this day, a fierce dislike to the writer and sometime actress Lynne Reid Banks. He reports that a sexual crudity in *Watch It Come Down*—"some people would put it in a brick wall"—was probably inspired by memories of her charms. He also recalls putting a used contraceptive into a smoked salmon sandwich and successfully getting her to bite it: "The unbelieving repulsion on her face, the prig struck by lightning, is fixed forever for me, like Kean's Macbeth." We never learn Miss Banks' precise crimes, though there is some suggestion she spoke unchivalrously of Osborne to Pamela Lane's parents. Indeed, there are many times in the biography when one's natural empathy with the author disappears, and one is left wondering who is the real villain, the "costive slug" (or whomever) he has just been gleefully evoking, or Osborne himself.

And so, of course, it is with many of the hate-objects in the plays themselves. Who wrote much of *Time Present*, *A Sense of Detachment* and *West of Suez*? Was it the Osborne we once knew, the crusader (so it seemed) for a society at once more caring and more responsive to the oppressed individual? Or was it his dear old mum, casting Black Looks from above her knitting, and peevishly

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animadverting on the inexplicable failure of a bad world to accord her her infinite due? Both, no doubt. Both were probably there from the beginning. The trouble is that the second seems substantially to have taken control of the house.

WHEN I SAY that both were there from the beginning, I have in mind not only *Look Back in Anger*, whose main character had his share of peevishness, self-pity, lack of charity and prejudice, but *Inadmissible Evidence*, whose main character suffered from all that and more. The difference is that in those days Osborne seemed to know it. Those traits were coolly perceived aspects of a variegated personality, and not items in a critique, attack or sermon we were supposed to applaud. This was particularly so in the case of *Inadmissible Evidence*, probably Osborne's masterpiece, and certainly the last play in which he turned his limitations into a positive advantage.

One character dominates the stage throughout. The supporting characters barely exist, and then only in relation to the solicitor, Bill Maitland. Indeed, the plot consists mainly of their mass exodus from his life. He has betrayed his wife, offended his friends, seduced the office girls and dropped them, insulted his daughter, bent his mistress's ear with a torrent of self-doubt, and given every indication to both his subordinates and clients that he's losing control of himself and his business; and consequently one after another rejects him, leaving him alone at the end in his empty office, awaiting the arrival of a representative of the Law Society, which has been investigating his dubious professional ethics.

Again, he spends long monologues railing, complaining or simply introspecting. The opening scene is actually one of his nightmares. He appears in a court accused of having published an obscenity, namely his life, and proceeds emotionally to expose himself in lurid detail. We gather he's a heavy drinker, a hypochondriac, forever dosing himself with pills; a self-made man, envious of those with more pukka backgrounds than his; self-disgusted, to the extent that he feels "irredeemably mediocre" and suspects he has never made a decision that wasn't shoddy or wrong; fearful of the rejection that, as we've seen, his behaviour tends to court; friendless, and, though not loveless, inclined to think he's inflicted more pain than pleasure in love. And the litany of self-accusation rises to an anguished climax: "I can't escape it, I can't forget it, and I can't begin again."

It could all add up to self-pity and acrimony. Yet we don't feel, as we do so often with the later plays, that Maitland is just a cracked trumpet through which the baleful playwright is woozily blazoning his own manifold beefs. On the contrary, Maitland

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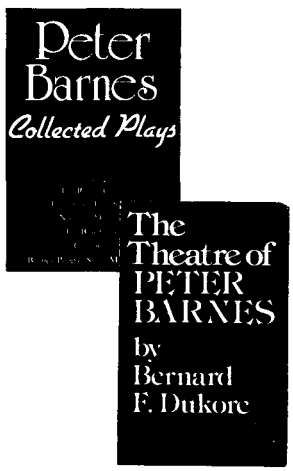

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is a character he sees with complete clarity, in the round, from outside as well as inside. Indeed, *Inadmissible Evidence* may be seen as a scrupulously chronicled journey into the head of a man on the brink of mental, emotional and spiritual breakdown, an arena that naturally limits the reality of the supporting cast. It is an objective picture of a subjective experience, and, by the end, an archetypal—no, *the* archetypal—study of middle-aged ennui, despair and disintegration. Ronald Bryden did not vastly exaggerate when he called the play a modern tragedy—"Osborne has gathered our English terrors in Maitland's image, and purged them pitiably and terribly."

That was in 1964, an achievement worth recalling and celebrating when one has been goaded and exasperated by his later work to dismiss Osborne from serious consideration. If one can't in all honesty see him writing with the same scathing detachment in the future, one must surely remember that he produced one play of historical importance in *Look Back in Anger*, one of undoubted excellence in *Inadmissible Evidence*, and, in *The Entertainer* and *A Patriot for Me*, two plays that future generations may well think worth reviving. Very few modern playwrights may have made such abject fools of themselves as Osborne; but very few can claim as much as that.

The Well-Intentioned Subsidy

Theatre Against Itself—By JOHN ELSOM

IN *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*,[1] a Californian don, Jonas Barrish, set himself an intellectual marathon, which he runs with great style and confidence until the final chapter; but then, as he enters the contemporary stadium, the clarity of his vision starts to blur, he totters from subject to subject, and finally breasts the tape from what suspiciously looks like the wrong direction. It is a slightly disappointing end to an admirable book; and it is not simply paradoxical to suggest that Barrish writes best about the contemporary scene obliquely, through his comments on Tertullian, the Puritans and Nietzsche, rather than in his survey of modern prejudices.

Barrish begins by pointing out how many words derived from the theatre (melodramatic, stagey, operatic) have acquired a derogatory ring; and he suggests that these reflect attitudes towards the theatre which are either condescending or downright hostile. This seems to me generally true. "I suppose she should get it out of her system", sighed a friend of mine whose niece had just won a scholarship to RADA. Barrish examines the history to such prejudices, starting with Plato and continuing through a formidable list of sages, who have either attacked the theatre or conscientiously spurned it by neglect.

From his calm and erudite accounts of their views (which were often expressed in wild invective), it transpires that something other than the theatre as a profession is at stake—the mimetic principle in human behaviour, man's capacity for make-believe. Is make-believe just a childish habit which distracts us from reality and weakens the fibre of resolution? Or is it a necessary talent which we all possess that helps us to project our minds into hypothetical situations, thus enabling us to adjust to circumstances and develop unused, perhaps unrecognised, sides to our personalities?

Barrish clearly thinks that make-believe is important, indeed "a distinguishing mark of humanity", and in discussing Tertullian, he cites the "condition of a famous World War I patient, Schneider." "Schneider's shell-wounds brought about a state of mind such that, although perfectly capable of doing anything he was asked to do, he no longer did anything unless he was asked." Schneider had lost the capacity to imagine future situations and thus could not calculate what personal response would be appropriate to meet them. He had become a kind of zombie.

The theatre, a singularly rich medium for make-believe, encourages its audiences to speculate about an almost infinitely wide spectrum of situations and thus strengthens that flexibility of mind which we need to cope with events in daily life. This Barrish Defence against the bigots and philistines seems sound enough for most normal purposes, although, after ten years as a weekly theatre critic, I sense the need for some qualifications. Minds can become so flexible that they are totally floppy, and Walter-Mitty-like addiction to make-believe can produce a Schneider in reverse, somebody who does nothing because he is overloaded with options.

In practice, however, most audiences approach the theatre with a certain ingrained scepticism, which is not the same as prejudice, and they need to be persuaded by the actors, directors and

[1] *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*. By JONAS BARRISH. University of California Press, £14.75, $30.60.

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dramatists concerned that the few hours spent in make-believe are not being wasted. Each production, indeed every performance of each production, has to establish its own credibility with its audience, although this credibility may have little to do with "social relevance", "realism", educative qualities or, in a limited sense, its cultural ones. Many familiar attempts to describe why certain productions ought to be received with respect derive, as Barrish points out, from the anti-theatrical prejudice. If you suggest that, say, a feminist play should be interesting because it is about feminism, you are placing the cause above the theatrical process. When the theatre tries to encourage virtue and discourage vice, it has already lost that speculative freedom which is the greatest asset of make-believe.

I have come to associate theatrical credibility with the formation of what I would term "myths." By myths, I do not mean unlikely stories about how the gods once clobbered Greek noblemen, although I would hastily add that the drama of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides is rich in what I would regard as myths. A myth is a useful story, one which helps to shape and organise experiences, and may even unlock another rusty door in the heart. A myth may have its basis in factual reality or it may not. What matters is that you can slot the theatrical experience into the mind, like a new programme into a computer, so that your mental energies flow along unfamiliar directions. When you have many such myths at your disposal, whether they be of *Hamlet*, *Waiting for Godot* or Simon Gray's *Quartermaine's Terms*,[2] you have more ways of looking at life, more mental tools at your disposal.

The question posed (but not confronted) by Barrish's final chapter is whether contemporary Western culture supports or discourages the myth-making process, and he starts boldly by asserting that much modern theatre is destructive of its own *raison d'être*. He cites the contempt felt by Ibsen, Chekhov and Shaw for the theatre of their times, notes the complete opposition to bourgeois drama voiced by the anti-art brigade, describes the flagrant breaches of the "pleasure principle" (in such works as Handke's *Offending the Audience*) and the downgrading of make-believe in the interests of propaganda and didacticism. But Barrish weakens his case by trying to capture too much—and too little—in his shrimping net. It is not necessarily prejudice to dislike many theatre productions and, if it were, Barrish would suffer from it himself. But if these passing dislikes become codified and institutionalised into political-cultural systems, supported or discouraged by subsidies and censorship, then we may well find that only *this* kind of theatre is allowed and not *that*. The

[2] *Quartermaine's Terms*. By SIMON GRAY. Methuen, £2.50.

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pluralism of the theatre as a whole suffers and, with it, its freedom of expression.

IT IS, FOR EXAMPLE, a frequent assumption in British theatre circles (which I am stretching to include members of the Arts Council Drama Panel) that our theatre is middle-class in origin and that one aim of subsidy is to spread the pleasure and enlightenment once enjoyed by a privileged élite amongst the proletariat. The Arts Council will even sometimes assert that it has done so. Reports emanate from its headquarters to the effect that there has been a remarkable growth in British theatre over the past decade or so, a progress stimulated and sustained by subsidy, and that this success reveals that the workers love to go to the theatre when they can afford to do so.

This view stands British theatrical history very nearly on its head. Before the First World War, the broad stream of British theatre was unquestionably popular, if not populist. *Curtains*,[3] a recently published survey of theatres existing between 1900 and 1914, reveals that there were more than a thousand of them, many very large by current standards, of which 83% have since been destroyed. In the 1880s, more than 50,000 people per week would visit the pantomimes at the Standard, Shoreditch. Shaw and Matthew Arnold disliked their contemporary theatre precisely because it was popular: they wanted a more thoughtful, literate and less philistine theatre. They may have been right, but it is one thing to despise Edwardian music hall and melodrama, and another to pretend that this strongly rooted popular tradition never existed. It is also quite misleading to pretend that there has been a growth in British theatre when, overall, taking the subsidised and commercial sectors together, there has been a decline.

The reason for this rewriting of history has been the need to find acceptable political justifications for arts subsidy. There is some political sex-appeal in the idea that you are spreading the goodies once enjoyed by the few among the many, none at all in the thought that you are supporting a once-popular medium which now, for various reasons, cannot support itself. From this central problem, other fallacies stem. Sir Roy Shaw sometimes argues that the Arts Council has had to take over the role once enjoyed by rich individual private patrons. But British theatre has never enjoyed private patronage on the scale of the Saxe-Meiningens, its individual patrons (such as the Flowers family at Stratford, Barry Jackson and Miss Horniman) being of modest rather than grandiose opulence. Its financial strength, until the iniquitous Entertainments Tax was introduced in 1916 and not abolished until 1958, lay in the box office. Taxation was a major factor in killing off our popular theatre; and even now you can find councils like Hammersmith who will subsidise two major theatres but charge exorbitant rents to the struggling circuses wanting to use Shepherds Bush Green. Nor have higher wages to actors led to subsidies, for their wages at the lower levels differ very little in real terms from those offered in the 1900s (though they are paid rehearsal fees) whereas their rewards on the upper levels are infinitely less.

I must here declare that I am in favour of arts subsidies, though distrustful about the current motives and ways of giving them, and my ten-year spell at *The Listener* was marked by a very sharp U-turn on the matter. I can even pinpoint the moment when my very painful backtracking began. I was writing *The History of the National Theatre*, a book begun by the late Nicholas Tomalin, and a member of the NT's management spoke words to me to this effect: "Let's face it, John, only 5% of those who work in the theatre are really talented and since there's a shortage of public money available, it's up to us to ensure that this 5% work under the best possible conditions." Well, even if one concedes (as I would not) that only 5% of the theatre is talented, there may be many opinions as to which 5% it is. This argument moreover justified the use of state money to cream off talent from the rest of British theatre, placing the National Theatre in a position of privilege not enjoyed by any theatre organisation since the days of the patent houses.

LARGELY AS the result of money spent on the National Theatre, the proportion of the Arts Council's drama budget spent in London has risen over the past ten years from roughly 20% of the whole to 40%, whereas the proportion spent on the English regions has declined from 60% to 41%, the remainder being spent in Scotland and Wales. Some of the money spent on the National Theatre's annual subsidy (£2 million out of £5 million) can be explained by the costs of running the building, but one only has to read Jim Hiley's *Theatre at Work*,[4] a detailed report on how the NT's *Galileo*, directed by John Dexter, reached the Olivier stage, to realise that the National Theatre operates on a financial scale totally unlike any other theatre in the country. The National Theatre, for example, has a wardrobe of 11,000 costumes, but there was some resentment that some costumes for *Galileo* were taken from stock and not freshly made. £16,000 in any case was spent on costumes, including a Doge's hat which took one-and-a-half weeks to make. Hiley accepts, as I would not, many assumptions con-

[3] *Curtains*. Edited by IAIN MACKINTOSH. John Offord Publications, £5.95.

[4] *Theatre at Work*. By JIM HILEY. Routledge, £9.75, paper £5.95.

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cerning the scale of the NT's operations, but nevertheless the plain documentary is very revealing.

Hiley's account can be read in two ways. You can either think, "What an extraordinary amount of money to waste on the wrong sort of perfectionism!" or you can feel that such expensive care is necessary to put over an unfamiliar, perhaps unpopular, socialist epic to British audiences. Frankly, I do not share Sir Peter Hall's opinion that *Galileo* and *Waiting for Godot* are "the two big plays of the mid-century" and if I did, I doubt whether this would justify such a heavy expenditure on the provision and maintenance of beards. Nevertheless, *Galileo* is an excellent example of the work for which the National Theatre was intended. Britain has a remarkably rich theatre tradition, but until recently we have always lacked a building which could perhaps house a major repertory company, which could tackle the research, training, experiment and performance necessary to explore the many strands which together comprise the European theatrical heritage. Thus, I am generally delighted when the National Theatre stages a *Galileo*, or Calderon's *The Mayor of Zalamea*,[5] or even (though I disliked the production intensely) *The Oresteia*.[6] I am a bit suspicious of *On The Razzle*,[7] more Stoppard than Nestroy, and rather annoyed when the National Theatre takes on a play, such as the latest Ayckbourn, which any other management in the country could do.

THE ARGUMENT which needs to be nailed, however, is that the National Theatre (or the Royal Shakespeare Company) represents the Best of British Theatre. The theatre is a process, at best pluralistic, in which many minds battle for the public's attention with many different kinds of values, propositions and myths. It is quite impossible, and indeed philistine, to suppose that you can compile a list of the best plays, the best actors, the best directors, jumble them all together in one building and hope that the mixture will work.

Even a "classic repertoire" policy, of the kind which I would support for the National Theatre, is extremely hard to achieve, for where does it begin or end? How is it possible for one management, however large, however catholic its tastes, to embrace the values expressed in Christopher Innes's book of ritual and the avant-garde, *Holy*

[5] *The Mayor of Zalamea*. By CALDERON. In a version by ADRIAN MITCHELL. Salamander Press, £3.75.
[6] *The Oresteia*. By AESCHYLUS. Translated by TONY HARRISON. Rex Collings, £3.50.
[7] *On The Razzle*. By JOHANN NESTROY. Adapted by TOM STOPPARD. Faber, £2.50.

Two of the latest from the WISCONSIN/WARNER BROS SCREENPLAY SERIES
Tino Balio, General Editor

DARK VICTORY

Released in 1939, *Dark Victory* was a daring movie for its time. It depicted its heroine, Bette Davis, dying of a brain tumor. For the role of Judith, Miss Davis drew upon every mood she had ever expressed; she also benefited greatly by the talents of director Edmund Goulding and screenwriter Casey Robinson, as well as a supporting cast that included Humphrey Bogart and Ronald Reagan. (Bernard F Dick, Editor)

240 pp, illus,
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I AM A FUGITIVE FROM THE CHAIN GANG

Since its release in 1932, *Chain Gang* has earned a reputation as one of the few Hollywood products that can be associated directly with social change. Film historians attribute the reform of the southern American chain gang system to the public outrage generated by this movie, which depicts a true story. (John E O'Connor, Editor)

224 pp, illus,
cloth £10·50, paper £4·20

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Theatre,[8] and those associated with Brecht and Reinhardt in Martin Esslin's *Mediations*,[9] and those linked with Meyerhold in Paul Schmidt's collection of interviews, *Meyerhold at Work*.[10] These three useful books all illustrate how deeply embedded in the societies of their times these movements were, how closely linked the dramatists were to the demands of their respective languages. Even if the National Theatre revived a modern British "classic", Joan Littlewood and Charles Chilton's *O, What a Lovely War!*, much would be lost because the production would simply not be part of the Theatre Workshop movement, whose chequered, dedicated history is outlined in Howard Goorney's *The Theatre Workshop Story*.[11]

All that a classic repertoire system can do is to indicate what the original plays and productions might have been like, and what the direct or indirect memory of them means to you now. The danger is that such a system provides something like a K-Tel selection of the World's Hundred Best Tunes or the *Reader's Digest* potted classics. I do not doubt, and never have done, the importance of the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company in the theatre system, particularly when they pursue the classic repertoire policy; nor would I wish in any way to disparage the excellence of many of their productions. But I do question most strongly the priority given to these two companies over the rest of the theatre system—a preference expressed partly through the dispensation of subsidies (in 1979/80, the two nationals received £7,023,500 between them, whereas 70 other building-based companies received £6,432,185 together) and partly in other ways. Every critic knows how many reviewing evenings recently have been taken up with the enormous output of productions from the two nationals, praiseworthy in one sense, but one cannot help feeling that it would be better to see fewer productions from these companies, each with longer runs, which would not only cut down their costs but enable us to see more work from regional and fringe theatres.

SUCH CONSIDERATIONS, however, are far from the nub of the problem—nor is the priority given to the nationals anything more than a manifestation of a more deeply-rooted crisis in our theatre. Subsidies were originally intended to be a supplement to the main system, which would remain pluralistic and financed mainly through the box office; and the intention was to ensure that certain very worthwhile theatre ventures should be protected somewhat from the vagaries of the market economy. Subsidies have now come, however, to be the major prop of the system itself, which means that an uneven spread of public subsidy inevitably starts to damage the pluralism of the theatre. Nor have we yet made the mental leap from financing the theatre for educational purposes, the original justification for subsidy, to assisting the theatre as a valuable process in itself. Thus, the subsidy system comes to express and further the anti-theatrical prejudice, which Barrish so graphically describes. The theatre as a free zone in society where we can explore all the opportunities afforded by make-believe, takes second place to a theatre whose aim is to educate, instruct and even, in a bland British way, to indoctrinate. The kind of middle-class, well-balanced and literature-inspired repertory programmes for which in the 1950s we craved (having read our Granville-Barker) is now writ large across the country; and for it, we have sacrificed our popular theatre, most of our commercial theatre and, above all, much of that fanatic determination to take part in the myth-making process which inspired Littlewood, Devine,

R. T. Witcombe
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[8] *Holy Theatre: Ritual and the Avant-Garde*. By CHRISTOPHER INNES. Cambridge University Press, £14.50.
[9] *Mediations: Essays on Brecht, Beckett and the Media*. By MARTIN ESSLIN. Eyre Methuen, £8.95.
[10] *Meyerhold at Work*. Edited by PAUL SCHMIDT. Carcanet Press, £12.95.
[11] *The Theatre Workshop Story*. By HOWARD GOORNEY. Eyre Methuen, £4.50.

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the young Peter Brook and almost every significant theatre movement since the theatre began.

Our theatre, in short, has become respectable. Even our scandals, such as Howard Brenton's *The Romans in Britain*, are easily justified in public terms by the owlish solemnity with which Brenton propounds his views on Northern Ireland.[12] We are all on the side of the angels, which is one reason, I suppose, why our left-wing dramatists find no spiritual conflict at all in fitting in with the demands of the nationals, even though these institutions are in such a palpable state of privilege in comparison with the rest of our theatres. The RSC hastened to point out that they regarded themselves as a left-wing organisation, even though they were putting on Solzhenitsyn's *The Love-child and the Innocent*.

If you hold a mechanistic view of society or if you believe that there is an essential nature to the individual man from which he or she deviates at peril, then clearly the theatre as a free zone for make-believe is a snare and a delusion, although it may still retain a limited usefulness as a medium for instruction. If, however, you believe otherwise, as Jonas Barrish does (and I do), then the freedom and the pluralism of the theatre are assets to be much prized, particularly at a time when the television companies (inevitably, under our system, somewhat centralised bodies) dominate so much of our public debate and so many of our perceptions of the outside world. Indeed I would justify the presence of subsidies to our theatres very much along these lines—that they help to preserve the pluralism of the myth-making process against the challenge of the mass-media, but only if subsidies are administered so as to support the system as a whole, not just educative parts of it. This has, of course, not happened and the history of the theatre in Britain over the past few years has suggested that it may never happen, that the trend is in the other direction. If that is the case, then the anti-theatrical bigots may well get their way and bring the theatre under their control. But I do not feel quite as despairing as this analysis may sound. The free theatre is a very sturdy plant and has survived much more repressive régimes than ours seem likely to be.

[12] *The Romans in Britain*. By HOWARD BRENTON. Methuen, £2.50.

Analysis & Evidence

Film Books—By CHARLES BARR

SAWDUST AND TINSEL IS the English title of a film made by Ingmar Bergman in 1953 (US title: *The Naked Night*; Swedish: *Gycklarnas Afton*, or, roughly, "Evening of the Clowns"). A new book by Paisley Livingston, *Ingmar Bergman and the Rituals of Art*,[1] contains several pages on it:

> "Early in *Sawdust and Tinsel*, a film that follows the plight of a band of circus performers, the action is interrupted by a flashback recalling the agony of a clown named Frost. . . ."

Once seen, never forgotten: this flashback has a stunning intensity. Frost is publicly humiliated when he finds his wife bathing naked with a crowd of soldiers. Soldiers and onlookers jeer at him as he carries her back across a rocky seashore to the circus tent. Visuals and soundtrack alike are heavily stylised, with bleached-out images, close-ups, angle shots, tied together in a rhythmic montage: all the elements combine to suggest nightmare. Critics have often been troubled by this sequence, seeing it as an arty bit of showing-off by Bergman that unbalances the film. Frost will be only a minor character: the length and sheer violence of the sequence appear excessive, gratuitous.

Mr Livingston rightly shows how it prefigures the main movement of the film: other performers besides Frost will be humiliated. But his discussion of it is very incomplete. "Early in *Sawdust and Tinsel* . . . the action is interrupted by a flashback recalling the agony of a clown named Frost." What action? How interrupted? Who recalls it?—these are questions not referred to.

All we have been shown, as introduction, is a line of horse-drawn wagons, moving on slowly as dawn breaks. The circus owner, Albert, wakes and goes to sit up in front beside the driver. There is time to absorb tempo and atmosphere. Then the driver starts, in a sing-song voice, to recount what happened in this same location seven years ago. The story of Frost takes the screen over. At the end of it, we return to the present and to the wagon: to the driver and, next to him, Albert, now sleeping.

[1] *Ingmar Bergman and the Rituals of Art*. By PAISLEY LIVINGSTON. Cornell University Press, £12.50, $22.50.

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Whose narrative exactly, whose point of view, have we seen? At one level, that of Frost himself: it seems to express the "subjectivity" of his experience. But the driver (who was present seven years ago) has narrated it, and Albert has at least half heard it. Indeed it is very much as though, as Albert dozed, these images formed in his mind; and it is his humiliation, in the main story, that will re-enact Frost's. At another level the narrative belongs to, is composed by, Bergman. He narrates the story to us, the audience, as the driver narrates it to Albert. The analogy is a suggestive one, and Bergman does not seem unaware of it. "I think also the reception by the audience of a picture is very, very hypnotic." But Livingston, though he quotes these words (elsewhere), in no way applies them to the specific codes and narrative devices of cinema, or of the works he is dealing with.

Looking at the Frost narrative, one could say that there are various possible (and overlapping?) "authors" or "enunciators" or "subjects" of the discourse; and that the positioning of the spectator, as subject, is very complex. Even to name such terms is to stray into provocative territory. They are much used and discussed in the last section of the British Film Institute's new Reader, *Theories of Authorship*.[2] In this volume, John Caughie has collected, and linked with a commentary, texts published between the early '50s and late '70s, and he has, in so doing, provoked some reviewers to fury. Jeffrey Richards, in the *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* (October 1981), describes the final section as "a vat of sticky treacle" and finishes thus:

> "The promulgation of this inflated windbaggery by *Screen* magazine and its contributors and the insertion of its adherents into teaching posts in universities and polytechnics and into key positions in the B.F.I. has done more to retard the development of an *accessible* film culture than any other factor of recent years. One has only to compare the writings it produces with those Caughie has selected from the 1960s to see the difference. The *Movie* critics were writing about films—passionately, excitingly, accessibly. The *Screen* critics are parroting the desiccated theories of posturing French ideologues who appear to know nothing and care less about films. That way lies madness. If Caughie's book does nothing else it reminds us forcibly of that danger."

Jeffrey Richards is a University lecturer in History and a prolific writer on film (e.g. *Visions of Yesterday*), whose work, within its clear limits, deserves respect. But his outburst is a sad and unworthy one. This is where we came in.... Reviewing a set of earlier film books in these pages, in October 1980, I looked at them in the context of current attacks on academic film study (e.g. by John Coleman, Derek Malcolm, Kevin Brownlow). I am sorry for the *déjà vu* effect, but one can't pretend that the continuance of these attacks is not a significant issue. The names are different this time round (Richards, Clancy Sigal, Lindsay Anderson —the last two in *The Guardian*) but the tone is the same, and so is the sheer indiscriminate and unresearched nature of the attacks, which could, cumulatively, have serious effects upon the allocation of resources.

There *are* problems of accessibility about the later material in *Theories of Authorship*—this would be impossible to deny. In part this is culpable: it's ironic that so many writers who set out to analyse the way in which a text addresses or "positions" the reader/spectator, and the implications of the mode of address, should be so careless about their own address to the reader. But this is not true of all, and the texts as a group are addressing themselves to essential and very complex issues about the status of cinema and what it *does* to its audience.

Exactly the same can be said of the second *Screen Reader*,[3] on Cinema and Semiotics, also recently published. As one whose own formation was *Movie*, I believe that the surprisingly varied work produced by, and around, *Screen* has a continuing value: the task is to discriminate within it, mediate it where necessary, and use it productively.

"The Theatre We Worked For"

The Letters of Eugene O'Neill to Kenneth Macgowan
edited by Jackson R. Bryer, with introductory essays by Travis Bogard

In 1929 Eugene O'Neill began a correspondence with theatrical critic and producer Kenneth Macgowan that was to last for twenty-nine years. The 157 letters and telegrams collected in this book recount the story of an association that helped reform the American theatre. Illustrated £17·50.

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THERE IS ONE KIND of film-maker who has always been taken seriously as an artist: the one who has had manifest control over his (or, in rare cases, her) work, i.e. who has controlled most or all of the main shaping functions of scripting, producing, directing, and editing. Chaplin was

[2] *Theories of Authorship*. Edited by JOHN CAUGHIE. Routledge and Kegan Paul, £11.95, paper £5.95.

[3] *Screen Reader 2: Cinema and Semiotics*. Edited by STEVE NEALE and MICK EATON. Society for Education in Film & Television, £4.95.

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clearly "author" of his films and it was natural to discuss him as an artist with a world view. The same applied to a few other briefly dominant Hollywood figures like Welles and Stroheim, and to many Europeans—Bergman, by the end of the 1950s, being a celebrated example. They were commonly set in opposition to the craftsmen directors of Hollywood. In the early 1960s the French word "*auteur*" became internationally current, applied to a different range of film-makers, and has remained so. Despite its awkwardness, it does usefully, for English speakers, avoid the dominant association of the word "author" with the *written* word; it also reflects the polemical work initiated by French critics in identifying and celebrating certain (mainly Hollywood) directors who, though they might operate under considerable restrictions, none the less imprinted a personality—a distinctive style and structure—upon their work, giving it as authentic a coherence as that of the "total" authors. Indeed, theirs might well have a profounder coherence since it had to be expressed in the very texture of the film. Andrew Sarris puts it clearly (1962: quoted in *Theories of Authorship*):

> "Because so much of the American cinema is commissioned, a director is forced to express his personality through the visual treatment of material rather than through the literary content of his material. A Cukor, who works with all sorts of projects, has a more developed abstract style than a Bergman, who is free to develop his own scripts."

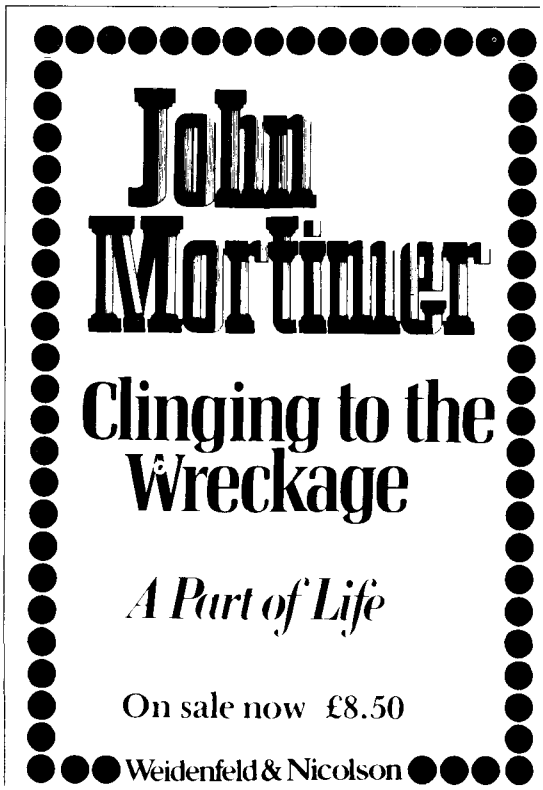
In some ways Lindsay Anderson's work on John Ford, written in England in the late 1940s for *Sequence* magazine (started in Oxford), had anticipated this position, but it was an isolated example, and it was *Movie*, developed in 1962 out of the film section of another Oxford magazine, *Oxford Opinion*, which promoted *auteur*-based criticism in England: this was the productive period to which Jeffrey Richards looks back nostalgically.

If Bergman was the "author" *par excellence*, Howard Hawks was the *auteur*: he worked in the Hollywood mainstream for 50 years, within the main commercial *genres*, and found himself elevated to artist status towards the end of this career. Livingston's book on Bergman, as implied earlier, has the strength and weakness of solid, conventional literary-academic work carried over into cinema. Joseph McBride's interview-book on Hawks[4] likewise seems very dated: a low-pressure run-through of his career, featuring endless familiar anecdotes of which Hawks is the hero.

DAVID BORDWELL'S BOOK on Dreyer[5] is in a different class, indeed it seems to me a major landmark. It is strongly informed by theory, without being inaccessible; it deals with an art-cinema director, whose films are rarely in circulation, without being esoteric; and it avoids the pitfalls of narrowness—of being unrealistically "romantic" about individual creativity—without the reductiveness, which some of the *Screen* texts encourage, of obliterating the author as a creative force worth talking about. Indeed it fulfils Edward Buscombe's prescription (1973: quoted in *Theories of Authorship*):

> "What is needed now is a theory of cinema that locates directors in a total situation, rather than one which assumes that their development has only an internal dynamic."

What is the "total situation" in which he places Dreyer? Partly it is industrial and cultural (incorporating research in early Danish cinema); most strikingly, it is the institutionalised "language" of cinema, as narrative and as organisation of space. "Dreyer enters cinema [1918] just when the classical spatial system is concluding its development." By rigorous analysis, based on abundant pictorial illustration, Bordwell shows how such films as *Passion of Joan of Arc* (late silent) and *Vampyr* (early sound) "dissolve the stability of the viewer's vantage point." Reading the films convin-



[4] *Hawks on Hawks*. By JOSEPH MCBRIDE. University of California Press, £10.50, $18.70.

[5] *The Films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer*. By DAVID BORDWELL. University of California Press, £17.50, $35.00, paper £8.50; paper $14.95.

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cingly in terms of a continuous "dialogue" with the codes of "classical Hollywood narrative"—codes which they both use and subvert—Bordwell is illuminating about Dreyer and about cinema in general. His book raises the reader's consciousness about film in a lucid and salutary way, and it's worth stressing that it owes much to the kind of theoretical work handled by *Screen* (to which Bordwell has frequently contributed).

Alongside this can be placed the comprehensive analysis of *Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible* by Kristin Thompson,[6] Bordwell's long-time collaborator (e.g. on the useful textbook *Film Art: an Introduction*). Less attractive as a volume (the 256 stills are collected at the end rather than integrated with the text), and probably less usable in the absence of the films it deals with, it does similar work, and seems an absolutely essential book for anyone studying Eisenstein.

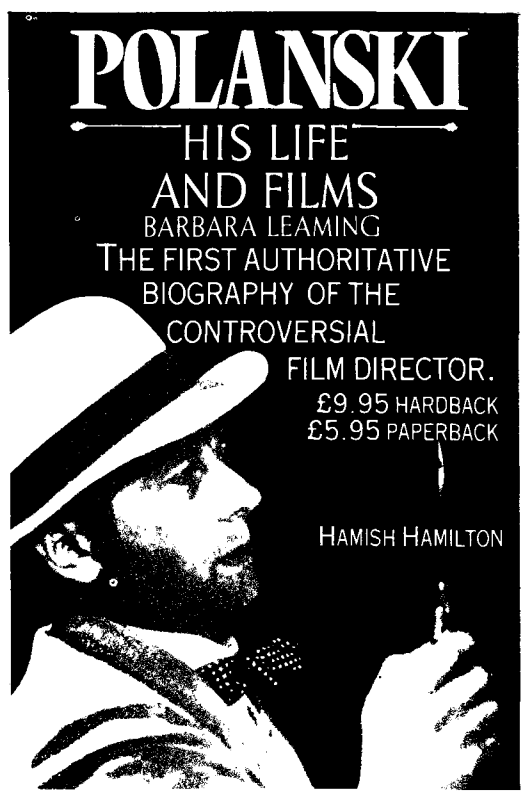
YET ANOTHER *tour de force* of meticulous presentation and lively scholarship is Alfred Guzzetti's analysis of *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*[7] (directed in 1967 by Jean-Luc Godard). To hold this or the Dreyer book in one's hands is, for a start, extremely pleasurable: they are sumptuous productions which do not, however, ask for a coffee table to rest upon. Guzzetti sees the Godard film as being, at one level, about aspects of contemporary Paris, and at another about the composing of images and sounds into film: one which, even more explicitly than Dreyer's, asks the spectator to think about systems of representation at the same time as following a narrative. From Guzzetti's Introduction:

> "The problems that *Two or Three Things* explores, and that prompt me to write about it, have their counterpart in the task of the writing itself. Chief among them is that, given the medium of print, one cannot quote a film as one can a text; one cannot even notate it as perfectly as music, or reproduce it as completely as a painting or drawing. Without an adequate reference mechanism, how is rigorous analysis possible? Indeed, few writers have even attempted such analyses. Accordingly, I have, in approaching this project, taken it as part of my task to devise a way of accurately rendering the film. . . ."

On the left of each page is a transcription from the film: the words, in French original and English translation; at least one still frame from each shot; timings, and other descriptive annotations. On the right: a detailed commentary which stays "in synch" with the description, so that one does not have to keep turning pages to relate the two aspects (as one sometimes has to even in Bordwell's Dreyer book). It's the nearest that film scholarship has come to the Arden edition of Shakespeare. All it lacks is movement and, unfortunately, colour (an important aspect of the film in question here).

Guzzetti claims that "this volume has as much to do with the problems of film scholarship as it does with the work of Jean-Luc Godard." True. Though this book is large and expensive one can envisage smaller-scale versions, and the model is certainly applicable to films of different types. To "classical Hollywood narrative", consolidating the kind of partial pictorial analysis already available (examples occur, not too well integrated, in *Theories of Authorship*). Going a stage further back: to pre-1915 films, by Griffith and others, and the crucial process of constituting what came eventually to be seen as the "natural" language of cinema. (If the *Screen* project has achieved nothing else it has at least put quotation marks indelibly around that word natural.) And, not least, to the range of films increasingly being studied, as "evidence", by historians.

This attention to film by modern historians is



[6] *Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible: A Neo-Formalist Analysis*. By KRISTIN THOMPSON. Princeton University Press, $42.00. paper $16.50; £22.40, paper £8.90.

[7] *Two or Three Things I Know About Her: Analysis of a Film by Godard*. By ALFRED GUZZETTI. Harvard University Press, $27.50, £16.50.

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clearly another growth area, one to be welcomed. I've referred already to the *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* (established 1981). The *Journal*'s editor, K. R. M. Short, has also edited a volume of essays on *Feature Films as History*:[8] unillustrated, uneven, and tentative in its editorial strategy. From the editor's Introduction:

> "Generally the historian finds himself undertaking content analysis concerning what characters in the film say or do."

—and he appears broadly to accept this as the priority, for intellectual reasons as well as economic ones. Again:

> "The message of a film can be communicated through skilful direction as in the case of Renoir, it can be communicated through the evocative symbolism of both ear and eye, but primarily it will be communicated through the content of its dialogue, especially since the advent of sound."

A rather crude model. Whole areas can be left to "colleagues who study film from the aesthetics side or that of semiotics." Surely the historian and the film scholar need each other, and need to be exposed to the full range of each other's skills. The work of another historian, Pierre Sorlin, suggests that this is not simply a counsel of perfection.[9] In the words of his own Introduction:

> "Theories on film—greatly appreciated in France—excite only a weak response in Britain. Comparisons of this sort are endless, but they do not explain the important differences: the English like to understand *what* films say, what they communicate; the French are more interested in how they say it, and how they can be understood."

(But of course, to quote a chapter-title from V. F. Perkins's book *Film as Film*: How *is* What.)

Sorlin's beautifully low-key statement indicates a basic distinction between the approach of the two books. Another is in the range they cover. Essays in the Short volume deal mainly with the cinema's presentation of recent events: e.g. films made during the Second World War about the Second World War. Sorlin looks at the staging of events that are already past history (e.g. *Birth of a Nation*) and asks how we can read such films as evidence about the society that made them. He is particularly good on Renoir's retrospective films of the 1930s, just as the Renoir essay in Short's volume (by Elizabeth Grottle Strebel) is to my mind the most useful one in it.

FINALLY, TO THESE WORKS by French and (mainly) English historians (though Sorlin has written in English, his book being based on lectures given to Oxford historians) can be added *Screening out the Past*[10] by an American social and cultural historian, Lary May. The somewhat mysterious title is glossed as "The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry." It is a closely argued, richly detailed, empirical account of American cinema in the silent period: cycles of films, content analysis, Hollywood (place and image), the physical reality of cinemas. He argues persuasively that "movies and mass culture were key elements in the transition from 19th-century values of strict behaviour toward greater moral experimentation." I find it one of those books which teach one a lot, and impress by the range of films cited, but which suddenly wobble when a film comes up that one is reasonably familiar with. One example: his account of a key 1920s film, *The Crowd*, crudely extracts a "message" from a plot summary that is both bare and misleading. May has no real methodology for "reading" films or for exploring the ways they can be inferred to have actually worked upon their audience's perceptions. How far precisely this limits the achievement of his book I am not altogether sure.

Reviewing books in a great batch like this is frustrating, and maybe one should not try to do it: how to avoid over-neat judgments and facile links? One processes the books the way that classical Hollywood narrative processes events into a digestible linear coherence. But it may be worth rounding the narrative off, pulling back into long-shot. This range of recent books, fortuitously gathered, does seem to represent three areas of study that are, at least in parts, alive and growing: close textual analysis, consideration of the individual "subject" (film-maker/spectator) in relation to the cinema institution, and film as evidence for the historian. The three areas overlap, and should do so even further.

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[8] *Feature Films as History*. Edited by K. R. M. SHORT. Croom Helm, £9.95.

[9] *The Film in History*. By PIERRE SORLIN. Basil Blackwell, £9.95.

[10] *Screening out the Past*. By LARY MAY. Oxford University Press, £12.00, $19.95.

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LANGUAGE

Word-Choosing

Sources of a Modern Obsession

By RUPERT WILKINSON

ABCDEFGHI
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AN OBSESSION with language, a fascination with its uses and misuses, is a feature of our modern consciousness. This is true on both sides of the Atlantic, though the offshoot industries are most developed in the United States. Much of it, of course, is not inherently new. When James Reston (in his *New York Times* column, 12 May 1980) lamented the empty sloganeering of the Presidential primaries, he gave credit to George Orwell's attack of 1946 on wartime propaganda. And when Mario Pei wrote his very contemporary book on *Weasel Words* he was careful to note that his title was coined around the turn of the century and popularised by Theodore Roosevelt.[1]

In longer perspective, our modern concern with language is the culmination of several overlapping stages, going back to Plato. More about this later; the fact remains that the current fascination has a distinctive focus and range. It can be defined as an interest—sometimes analytical, sometimes pretend-analytical—in the evolution of language, its social significance, and its hidden meanings and functions. At the more arcane levels it has been shaped by the great developments in linguistics, structuralism, semiotics, analytical philosophy—and the march of these disciplines into other fields, producing a whole spectrum of "interstitial" studies, from sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology to the use of literary techniques in studying speeches and documents.

In Britain as well as America, psychologists have started to examine minutely the way different politicians speak, in terms of the reassurances and other appeals they offer. In political science itself, "rhetoric" and "communication" are growth subjects. It is significant that a recent scholarly attempt to restore Eisenhower as an "Activist President" makes much of his handling of language in speech drafts and meetings; his famous bumbling at press conferences emerges as just one element of a purposeful whole.[2] The increasing focus of political scientists on language can be seen in the works of Murray Edelman, the leading "name" in the field. In 1964 he published *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (with two chapters specifically on language). The sequel in 1977 was entitled *Political Language: Words That Succeed and Policies That Fail*.[3] In fact, *Political Language* is quite thin in its examples and analysis of language, and this brings us to another aspect of the modern fascination.

As the study of language has ramified on to semi-popular levels, so the range of quality and pretentiousness has grown. Leonard Michaels' and Christopher Ricks' anthology, *The State of the Language* (1980), faithfully represents this. Its 63 short essays and poems vary from searching analyses to laundry-lists of usage sporadically glossed. Some of the best pieces, wide-ranging as well as deep, deal with highly specific subcultures and vocabularies (Marina Vaizey on "Art Language", Edmund White on the changing "Political Vocabulary of Homosexuality", André Kukla on "The Modern Language of Consciousness"). Other equally specific articles are basically compilations, nor does there seem to be much correlation between the writer's distinction and the weight of his contribution. In "Getting It Wrong" Kingsley Amis provides not much more than a survey of malapropisms. On "Prison Language" Sean McConville says little about the attitudes and social structure that his translated samples express. "The Language of Politics" by Enoch Powell compares four Parliamentary speeches delivered in the past 90 years, having explicitly abandoned hypotheses about trends. Disappointments such as these, however, are

[1] Mario Pei, *Weasel Words: The Art of Saying What You Don't Mean* (1978). George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language", reprinted in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, Vol. 4 (ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, 1968).

[2] Fred I. Greenstein, "Eisenhower as an Activist President", *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 1979–80), pp. 575–99.

[3] Cf. Theodore C. Sorensen, "The Trouble with Slogans", *Harper's* (September 1980). It is characteristic of our times that Sorensen's piece advances foreign policy views via an attack on "word games" and oversimplified "myths."

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illuminating. They point up the difference between intellectual rigour and intellectual status and influence. A field has "arrived" not when its enthusiasms are used well but when they are *also* used badly or inflatedly.

THE MODERN SURGE of linguistic interest, spreading beyond the traditional fiefs of language scholars, dates from the 1960s, the decade in which Marshall McLuhan and his famous formula ("the medium is the message") caught up on the establishment of television in the 1950s and found a wide audience. It was the decade of intellectual "buzz-words" such as *vocabulary* and *codes*, hard-sounding terms which promised an expert penetration of language yet were often used quite loosely to denote any set of ideas or customs. In historical writing as well as smart conversation, "language" came to mean almost anything, and this vogue continued into the 1970s.

Loose language about language, however, was only the escort of a movement with intellectual depth and ancient roots. Interest in what a word means and how it came to mean it is as old in the West as Plato's *Cratylus*. Interest in the manipulation of such meanings goes back through 18th-century political dissent to classical theories of rhetoric. And our lingering hopes that language *can* pin down an objective reality have a basis in 17th-century science and its countervailing search for unbiased definitions. These eclectic influences give a cumulative force to current debates about the relationships between language, reality, and politics.

A DIFFERENT WAY OF LOOKING at the historical dimension is to see in language interest a pattern of ebb and flow rather than cumulative development. In different periods and places we find fever-points of interest. One such fever was the colonial American drive, well developed in the 18th century, to purify the English language and return to a past ideal.[4] Another occurred in the British 1820s and early '30s. Extensions in popular literacy and a spate of political reform stimulated a concern about demagoguery and a search for truth-in-politics. Tracts such as Jeremy Bentham's *Book of Fallacies* (1824) and George Cornewall Lewis's *Remarks on the Use and Abuse of Some Political Terms* (1832) represented a broad attack on rhetorical deception. Thus, in Bentham's shooting gallery, the "fallacy of danger"—the raising of false alarms about a proposed measure—combines evasion with *ad hominem* smear.

> "Imputation of bad motives, bad designs, bad conduct and character, etc. are ordinarily cast on the authors and advocates of the obnoxious measure; whilst the term employed is such as to beg the question in dispute. Thus, in the present instance, *innovation* means a *bad* change, presenting to the mind, besides the idea of a change, the proposition, either that change in general is a bad thing; or at least that the sort of thing in question is a bad change. . . ."

It was characteristic of Bentham's time that he made much of the "intimate" link between "the business of classification and that of nomenclature"; it was equally characteristic that his own objective-sounding taxonomy had a political (reformist) motive and bias.[5]

These two historical views of linguistic interest are not necessarily opposed. Our current interest may be part of a long-term development, yet subject to a shorter-term rhythm of advance and decline. Already, among some students of social processes and public policy, there are seeds of reaction against the study of rhetoric and other forms of manipulative language. Such study, it is said, takes our attention *away* from socio-economic structures; it pays too much attention to the smokescreen and not enough to the source of the fire. On a number of related counts, structuralism and analytical philosophy have lost some of the following they once had. In America, less arcanely, the shrinkage in voter turnout and the electorate's dissatisfaction with the 1980 Presidential campaigns seemed to strengthen the argument that the political system's standard rhetoric was out of touch with the people; that it had become a fossilised, literary canon, unworthy of study.

These, however, are not majority positions. In many areas the study of language and its social aspects is confident and growing. Indeed, the very criticism of the study of language invites rejoinders, and so on into a prolonged academic regression.

WHY, THEN, has language become all—nearly all—the rage? My explanations focus not on streams within the study of language itself, but on sociological and political developments in society as a whole, especially in America, which have fostered diverse types of linguistic analysis. Of course the two kinds of development interact: the full, intellectual history of structuralism cannot, for example, exclude trends in French society. This line of explanation, however, I must leave to others.

We may start with the most obvious forces: the

[4] For more on this, see Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans* (Vol. 1, *The Colonial Experience*, 1958), Chapter 4.

[5] Bentham's categories and examples were directed against those who resisted political change. For the above quotations, see *The Book of Fallacies: From the Unfinished Papers of Jeremy Bentham* (1824).

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social conflicts of the 1960s and the sense of a dangerously distended social order. In the midst of America's "urban crisis", Nelson Rockefeller and others spoke of the urgent duty of leaders to *communicate* better, often without saying much about what should be communicated. (Similar declarations became quite fashionable in Britain during the industrial conflicts of the early 1970s.) In a more substantial way, too, academics, publishers and conference organisers stirred themselves to create *dialogue* between warring camps and doctrines.

Yet other societies at other times have had social conflict without making so much of communication and language. A distinctive feature of the '60s was the convergence of social conflict with the burgeoning of "knowledge industries" (research, publishing, highbrow entertainment) fed by extensive higher education. These industries in turn were part of a wider aspect of advanced economic development—the trend to what John Naisbitt (of the Yankelovich survey research firm) has called "the Information Society."

By 1980 more than half the American labour force was employed in occupations largely concerned with information-processing, from banking to teaching. In the Information Society's culture, *content-analysis*—the methodical, quantitative study of messages—finds a significant niche. Largely developed in the 1940s and '50s, content-analysis was used by university schools of journalism and communications in the United States to make their curricula "more scientific." At the same time it tapped an old and democratic American tendency: the intellectualisation of the mundane. Just as "Phys. Ed." and "Home Economics" in many a state-college curriculum have long enjoyed formal parity with mathematics, literature, or political theory, so—to the practitioners of content-analysis—no scrap of

New York's Left: a "Moment of Truth"?

New York City

TOWN HALL *on West 43rd Street has been the favourite meeting place of the New York Left for many years. A few nights ago there was a gathering there which showed how deeply scattered and split the local radicals have become in the age of Reagan. The evening was dedicated to Solidarity, and the advance cast list was impressive. From the Sixties there came Allen Ginsberg and Dick Gregory. From the world of letters came Kurt Vonnegut, E. L. Doctorow, Susan Sontag, Studs Terkel, and Gore Vidal. There were spokesmen from union reform groups, from the sacked air traffic controllers, and from Solidarity itself. There were even Pete Seeger and Paul Robeson Junior, never before seen on a platform critical of the Soviet Union.*

All seemed to be going well. Most of the American Left feels itself on the side of the Poles but some comrades are a bit—how can one say?—embarrassed. All those Catholics, for one thing. And such a harvest of raw propaganda for Reagan and Haig. The standard speech for the evening was a declaration of outrage about events in Warsaw, followed by a rather longer diatribe about the hypocrisy of Washington in crushing strikes, bullying El Salvador and weeping crocodile tears for the Poles.

THIS WAS *pushing along quite well, until Susan Sontag got up. She was once considered for prosecution for giving aid and comfort to Hanoi, and has graced most of the literary and political barricades in the last decades. So it came as a shock when she ended her condemnation of Reagan and said:*

"I have the impression that much of what is said about politics by people on the so-called democratic Left, which includes many people here tonight, has been governed by the wish not to give comfort to reactionary forces. With that consideration in mind, people on the Left have willingly and unwillingly told a lot of lies."

The hall became restive on a sudden. Nor did Ms Sontag spare anybody. She went on:

"I can remember when Czesaw Milosz's book *The Captive Mind* **was published in this country in 1953 . . . I regarded the book as an instrument of cold war propaganda, giving aid and comfort to the rising tide of McCarthyism. That is, I read the book and was utterly unconvinced by it. I put it on my student's bookshelf."**

Hubbub in the hall, rising to boos and shouts:

"Imagine, if you will, someone who read only the *Reader's Digest* **between 1950 and 1970, and someone who in the same period read only the** *Nation* **or the** *New Statesman*. **Which reader would have been better informed about the realities of Communism? The answer, I think, should give us pause. Can it be that our enemies were right? . . ."**[1]

AFTER THIS, *it was almost an anti-climax when she referred to Communism as "Fascism with a human face" and left the platform. Applause and jeers just about equalled one another as she did so. The cocktail and weekly magazine circuit has been humming ever since.*

To have been at the meeting was to recognise that a "moment" had occurred.

Christopher Hitchens
in THE SPECTATOR

[1] *Editor's Note:* Mr Hitchens, writing in the *Spectator* of 6 March, omits mentioning one astonishing detail, possibly because having left the *New Statesman* in London he is now with *The Nation* in New York.

The *N.Y. Times* compared the full tape-recorded text of Susan Sontag's speech with the edited version which appeared in *The Nation*, and reported (27 Feb.) that this passage had been completely eliminated. Evidently "telling a lot of lies" goes hand in hand with censoring a lot of truths.

In a subsequent issue of *The Nation* (27 February, pp. 229–30) the editors quoted the missing paragraph which had incriminated their journal, adding only by way of explanation one of the magazine's most intriguing ideological pronouncements: "The issue of 'double standards' is an exceptionally difficult one."

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advertising, no reporter's squib, no politician's remark is unworthy of serious study.

The use of content-analysis reached a culminating point recently when the (British) *Journal of American Studies* published the first in many observations of stage Irishmen to use this type of approach. By classifying and counting the words used to describe Irish characters in popular dramatic scripts, the author (a Texas historian) shed "new light" on changing ethnic stereotypes in 19th-century America.[6]

By definition, content-analysis itself does not reveal the structure and context of language; but it provides a bridge between social science measurement and the humanities. It is likewise well-suited to computer use. In many respects (content-analysis is only one of them) computers have given a sense of engineering hardness and potency to the study of language—enter communications theory, information scanning, "social noise." Much of this has little to do with syntax, but it contributes to an ethos which says, in effect, "We cannot take for granted our forms of communication, not its natural base nor its efficacy nor even its legitimacy. . . ."

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS of the 1960s sharpened this ethos. Blacks, Youth, Women—groups so often in the past considered to be limited in intellect and deservedly subordinate—challenged middle-class assumptions about language. The claim was powerfully presented that lower-class Blacks, for example, were not inarticulate—they just talked differently; maybe they even talked better, being "street-wise" to gritty realities. Claims such as these stimulated a wide range of interest in language and culture, from Black idiom to "classroom cueing" (how a teacher talks to different children). A converse trend was the decline of élite confidence in a unified language of authority. In America particularly, specialised professional argots had always worked against the establishment of one ruling-class shorthand. These argots themselves now came under mounting fire in the late 1960s and early '70s, as consumers and clients reacted against the professionals on whose services they depended. "Teacher talk . . . lawyer language . . . architect jargon" seemed to block rather than communicate, to exploit and conceal, to mystify under a cover of rational expertise.

ONE RESULT IN AMERICA is an ambivalence towards the turn-over of in-group terms. The "Language" column of William Safire (Nixon speechwriter turned *New York Times* columnist) finds a steady market by offering a guide to what is "in" while attacking "verbal pollution": trendy inaccuracies, smarmy redundancies, and phrases which cannibalise each other. For those who feel they can keep up with the latest in language, Safire provides linguistic roots. For those who cannot, he provides the solace of mockery. He speaks to the tension between the standardisation of so much in the society and the splintering of its letters and intellectual discourse—what the editor of *Harper's* has called a "diaspora", dating from the mid-1960s.[7] When the lingos of different subcultures and value-systems do meet, the insecure, funny mixtures that result make just the right material for

[6] Dale T. Knobel, "A Vocabulary of Ethnic Perception: Content Analysis of the American Stage Irishman, 1820–1860", *Journal of American Studies* (April 1981), pp. 45–71. In constructing his categories, Knobel drew on a source-book which itself marks the movement of studies of ethnic prejudice into the field of language—Howard J. Ehrlich, *The Social Psychology of Prejudice: A Systematic Theoretical Review and Propositional Inventory of the American Social Psychological Study of Prejudice* (1973).

[7] Lewis H. Lapham, "Intimations of Mortality: Notes on the Restoration of *Harper's* Magazine", *Harper's* (September 1980); "Gilding the News", *Harper's* (July 1981). Cf. Marina Vaizey on the connections between self-conscious labelling and a post-war "explosion of theory and explanation" in the Anglo-American art world: "Art Language," in *The State of the Language*, ed. Michaels and Ricks.

William Rodgers

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consciousness about language. William Hamilton of *The New Yorker* has made this a formula in his cartoons and captions of American upper-class life:[8]

"Please Justine! Mummy is trying to structure a dinner party."

"She's really wired into the colonial dames."

The underlying factor here, the effect of contact between diverse groups, is not to be underestimated. The essential alienness of American Indian languages to western anthropologists stimulated structuralism; so, in a general way, media contact and speeded travel between cultures made people more aware of linguistic conventions and more curious about their meanings.[9]

BUT HERE there emerges a seeming contradiction. In Britain, "public school" and Oxbridge notions of personal leadership have, by their very reliance on a common élite shorthand, stressed the social importance of language, especially a commanding grace in speech. This tradition ties at one end into the clarity and precision with which so many of the upper-class British military speak and write (traits functional to military training and hierarchy, if far from Pentagonese). At another end it supports the long-established BBC appetite for word and conversation games. These proclivities, however, are different from analytical, even pseudo-analytical, concerns with language itself. Although popular etymology has flourished in Britain, as Eric Partridge's books and Philip Howard's articles demonstrate, this practice is not a particular hallmark of an Oxbridge or public-school élite, which has so often taken for granted class styles of language.

In broader terms, the modern interest in language is shaped by our changing conceptions of authority and power. As Bosses and Governments have become less repressive in our Atlantic corners of the globe, so we have attended more to the way they appear to control by manipulation. From the realm of advertising to that of bureaucratic management, we notice how powerful interests and authorities deploy language to promote, bias, and subordinate.

A signal expression of this is Richard Sennett's book, *Authority* (1980), which trains a complex psychological imagination upon the political uses of metaphor and conversational tactics; it ends in a position of creative anarchism, requiring an active but studious citizenry to make authority more "legible" and thereby interruptable. Sennett's stress on language in power relations extends to modern social systems as a whole the concern about totalitarianism and the control of language which George Orwell elaborated in *1984*.[10] The validity of such extensions must remain contested. A conservative may well argue that, as Western society has become more humane, those people who wish anyway to rebel have had to shift their sights from outright brutality to more nebulous forms of control. Their suspicious imaginations can even conceive of "repressive tolerance." Others, on the Right as well as the Left, would reply that modern élites have indeed developed insidious and sophisticated techniques of psychological control, and that these inevitably involve language.

IN THE EARLY 1960s this viewpoint, aided by a new-found cultural pluralism, attracted many intellectuals and professionals to conceptions of "deviance" and of social labelling. Conventional society, it was argued, invented—or reinforced—deviant behaviour by its verbal categories as well

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[8] William Hamilton, *Husbands, Wives and Live-Togethers* (1976).

[9] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976).

[10] By the late 1950s, political scientists had distinguished "totalitarian" régimes (fascist, communist) from earlier dictatorships, partly in terms of control over thought and expression by centralised mass communications, education, and secret police. Cf. Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (1956).

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as by its asylums and prisons. On "the myth of Mental Illness" the psychiatrist Thomas Szasz took an extreme but influential position. Whether or not he was right in claiming "madness" to be largely a social fiction, he did identify an important process; we might call it "a chase through language." Terms for mental illness, introduced with the dual purpose of tolerance and control, start off with neutral connotations. These, however, are overtaken by more stigmatising senses as they enter general usage. "Hysterical", "sick", "neurotic" have all undergone this process; and indeed people doing therapeutic work with "spastics" have been heard to use that very term to describe ineffective colleagues and systems. Our better natures, it seems, introduce words to promote compassion—but residual needs to despise and distance weakness will not be stopped. As supporters of the Szasz school have observed, the terminology of mental illness substitutes labels of incompetence for labels of moral deficiency, and in a secular society this is no gift. Awareness of these problems fed the debate in the 1960s about the appropriateness of "medical metaphors" in psychiatry and "the disease concept" in the treatment of alcoholism. Later, as countercultural movements mounted their attack on "technocracy", the debate joined a more general controversy about the language of social science and its concealment of preference and prescription in a seemingly value-free jargon of systems and functions.[11]

THE 1960s PRODUCED, likewise, a new awareness of the verbal anaesthetics practised by political and military bureaucracies. A procession of books on Nazi war crimes and "the authoritarian personality" was capped in 1963 by Hannah Arendt's discourse on Eichmann, which included a brief but influential study of Nazi "language rules", with their euphemisms such as "Final Solution" and "special treatment."[12] When the Viet Nam War thrust military procedures into the media glare of a highly civilian society, its critics were swift to expose similar uses of language, e.g. "collateral costs" for civilian casualties. Peaceable institutions, too, in Britain as well as America, have increasingly stood accused of dehumanising their clients by word as well as action. The hospital doctor who writes of his patients as "cases" or "beds" may in fact do so in the spirit of humane efficiency rather than power or contempt; but today's sociolinguists are not always ready to give him the benefit of the doubt.

On a very different plane, the magic and supposed power of the expanded US Presidency, an office dramatised by the dual demands of kingship and political leadership, have sharply focused the study of symbolic politics and language. Robert Bellah's theory of "civil religion in America" drew heavily on his analysis of words and phrases in Presidential addresses. From the Revolution onwards (according to Bellah), a set of beliefs and symbols drawn from Judaeo-Christian traditions but shorn of specific dogma has been embedded in American political rhetoric and affected national policies.[13] Today, Inaugurals and other Presidential speeches are widely studied for their symbolic style and content. For several years now, at Keele University, a political scientist, Richard Maidment (whose own work on the Supreme Court shows a nice ear for judicial language), has teamed up with a semiologist, Richard Godden, in a study of Pres-

[11] Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance", in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (ed. R. P. Wolff, 1965). Thomas Szasz, *Law, Liberty and Psychiatry* (1963). I have developed the notion of a verbal "chase" and explored the political psychology of "pathologising" in *The Broken Rebel: A Study in Culture, Politics and Authoritarian Character* (1972).

A recent variation on this theme, turning the tables on some of the critics, is Roger Sandall's analysis of the meanings and uses of "culture": "When I Hear the Word 'Culture' . . . ", ENCOUNTER (October 1980).

[12] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), pp. 80–81.

[13] Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America", *Daedalus* (Winter 1967); *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (1975).

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JOHN MURRAY

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ident Kennedy's rhetoric. They have used it, among other things, to explore a politician's intuitive ability (with the help of a word-wise speechwriter) to swivel a standard word or phrase so that it conveys substantially different meanings to different audiences.

Such attention, ironically, may grow as we realise more and more that Presidents and other politicians do *not* have the power to achieve what they are expected to, that they are better at deploying symbols and speaking to attitudes than at moving programmes. The desire to see through such manipulations joins with a widening concern about the effects of TV on politics, language, and literacy. Again, the factor of alienness. Barbara Walters and *Dr Who* shape thought and expression no more potently than countless parents and family friends; but they come from outside what sociologists call the "primary group", and they come more dramatically, so we hear them more consciously.

But we are also interested in what leaders and opinion-shapers *don't* say. Just as good writers and architects speak through spaces as well as structures, so the converse of political interest in language is an interest in manipulation through silence. This has been called the second and third dimensions of power. In its first dimension, power produces explicit decisions amid overtly contested alternatives. In its second, it deliberately withholds issues from public agendas. The third dimension has to do with the more general way in which powerful groups, often unconsciously, bias popular values and wishes through their control of attitude-shaping institutions.[14] These processes reach back into language itself. We have become increasingly aware that terminology and syntax can screen out the serious consideration of certain issues and viewpoints, but making them seem frivolous, distasteful, or "extreme" (i.e. both dangerous and discountable).

The biasing of language, however, is not confined to top-dog establishments. Conservatives, liberals, and left-wing radicals all tend to use language to bias, discredit and dismiss, while—increasingly—accusing their opponents of doing just that. Thus, in Britain, how many people—liberals as well as right-wingers—accuse "Bennites" of demagoguery in demagogic terms, fulminating against "activists" and "lurches to the Left." Meanwhile, among the "lurchers", university students who (as the euphemism goes) "take direct action" against administration policies are quick to decry evasions and inaccuracies in official statements, yet operate their own language of issue-avoidance when they break the law. If only some get arrested, the rallying cry is "victimisation"; if most get arrested, it is "mass arrests." We are back at Bentham's complaint.[15]

THE MODERN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT cuts across many of these developments. No political force has done more than feminism to promote sensitivity to language. The reasons are chiefly sociological. Most feminists are similar in class and education to the male power-wielders they contend against. That power has both a small- and a large-scale dimension; it is "close in" as well as remote. It is not the B-52 bombing populations the pilot cannot see, nor is it the White employer rejecting the Black applicant he barely meets or knows. Its adversary relationships take place in the home as well as the office, and its altercations are centred on "roles"—but that involves words, the way that men and women constantly talk to each other and about each other.

The feminist assault on "male dominance" in language has advanced along three main fronts. First, there is the challenge to titles and nomenclature. From the well-known rejection of "*Miss*", "*mankind*" and "*chairman*" (let alone the presumption in "*Mrs James Smith*"), the attack proceeds to more vaguely defined targets and to questions about meanings. Why is "spinster" more unfavourable than "bachelor"? Why does "mistress" connote a different range of references to those of "master"?[16] The second line of assault focuses on the syntax and imagery of whole passages in which females are subordinated even more than is true in the reality depicted. As feminist critics have shown, this is a widespread phenomenon, from *Peter & Jane* stories to the literature of

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[14] Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (1974). Though Lukes' concepts are applicable to almost any political system, they elaborate on Karl Marx's argument that "Capitalism" has a special tendency to disguise its power relations, especially through language. See Robert L. Heilbroner, *Marxism: For and Against* (1980).

[15] For an American treatment of double standards in political language, see Vic Gold's guide to "Libspeak", "Invasion of the Liberal Trendies", *The Washingtonian* (April 1980), pp. 129–31.

[16] Dale Spender, *Man Made Language* (1980).

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sociobiology.[17] The third attack identifies traditional differences between male and female speech. A host of differences—from voice tone to the use of interruption—have been recorded in support of the thesis that men usually dominate and women defer when they talk to each other.

The strength of these critiques is that they offer alternative constructions as well as critical deconstructions of language. The least impressive of these constructions, inviting ridicule because they are jerry-made, are the feminist alternatives to established designations—synthetic "*chairpersons*" and near-miss "*Ms*'s." (My wife would sooner settle for plain "Mary Wilkinson", which leads one to question whether all these prefix designations, at least in written form, are needed at all.) But of course the battle does not end here. Not only have feminists rewritten the roles of women in history and fiction; they have also drawn attention to positive functions and distinctive sensibilities in the way that many women, outside as well as inside "the movement", have written and spoken. Angela Carter's description of an "*Ur*-language of sisterhood" that speaks across class and race articulates something that women have long known but are now newly aware of: the fact that women share a vocabulary of meanings in which quite ordinary expressions ("a nice bit of meat", "she's feeling peaky") have both an overtone and a precision that frequently eludes men.[18]

MY LAST STOP, in this journey through causes of language concern, is perhaps the most contentious. To understand the concern fully, I think one must repair to a notion of "social decadence." By decadence I do not mean any simple state of moral decay; it is not necessarily, on balance, a pejorative concept. With reference to language, modern society has become decadent in the following sense. When most workers, high or low, are distanced from the purposefulness of what they do, and when economic expansion slows, the culture turns in on itself, from product to process, to technical nicety, and to symbols. The trend encourages narcissism, and preciousness, but not always a decadence of materialism. It focuses less on acquisition than on experience, relationships, and the presentation of self, more on what happens between people than on what they make or do.[19]

The trend brings together the new "Information Society" and changing conceptions of the American Presidency. As we grow less confident of accomplishing social tasks, of controlling bureaucracies (private or public) and great economic forces, so we focus all the more on little words and small symbols. If we are disposed towards political change, we may tell ourselves that after all words and symbols can in the end alter society. Sometimes they may—eventually. In the meantime, we can simply enjoy the study of Black talk, Sister talk, and the latest comic specimens from the word-mills of bureaucrats and salesmen.

[17] A neat case-study is Sarah Lucia Hoagland's review of the language used by Professor E. O. Wilson to describe male and female roles in a pride of lions: "Androcentric Rhetoric in Sociobiology", *Women's Studies International Quarterly* (No. 2-3, Vol. III 1980). Special Issue on "The Voices and Words of Women and Men." Cf. E. O. Wilson, *Sociobiology: the New Synthesis* (1975).

[18] Angela Carter, "The Language of Sisterhood", in *The State of the Language*, pp. 226 ff.

[19] Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (1979). Much of the trend was foreseen by David Riesman three decades ago, in *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (1950). See also his "Egocentrism: Is the American Character Changing?", ENCOUNTER (August-September 1980), pp. 19–27; Hans J. Morgenthau and Ethel Person, "The Roots of Narcissism", *Partisan Review* (1978), pp. 337–47.

Bear

Hugs and embraces, constellations
are his immediate collocations
—or childhood mythologies
stuffed in their cupboardsful of brown toys.

But brutal and shambling is the bear's gait
whose end is to maul, or suffocate.
Like the tendency of your furred arms,
Ursula, fraught with dependent charms.

John Gohorry

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FILM

The Missing Funeral

On "Reds" & John Reed—By FERDINAND MOUNT

WHAT IS a chorus for? In the classical drama, the chorus acts as narrator and commentator; it unlocks our emotions and sharpens our understanding by lamenting, deploring and explaining the events that are unrolling before our eyes. Most people who have seen Warren Beatty's film *Reds* regard as its most vivid feature the brief shots of elderly "real people", who include famous writers like Henry Miller and Dame Rebecca West offering comments on and reminiscences of John Reed and Louise Bryant, the hero and heroine of the film, whom they knew or knew of when they themselves were young. These bald and wrinkled heads, with their great brown age-freckles, their vague hesitances, their hoarse chuckles, are not easily forgotten. By sharp editing and juxtaposing, Mr Beatty makes their statements contradict; again and again we are reminded how fragile our memories of the past are, how unreliable our judgments, how arbitrary our definitions, how little we know even of our friends. Because they stand outside the story and really are speaking to us now rather than in a fictional 1917, these elderly witnesses inescapably remind us of a chorus.

Yet their function is the opposite of the function of the classical chorus, which is to sharpen our perception of the iron laws of the universe. Warren Beatty's chorus *blurs* the whole enterprise and deliberately so. Questions of historical fact—were Jack and Louise Communists? did she have an affair with Eugene O'Neill, her husband's best friend?—are made to seem pedantic and pointless. The background becomes hazy, isolating and throwing into relief the romantic tableaux of the foreground. The Beatty chorus becomes as much a backdrop for romance as the set of St Beattysburg erected at enormous expense for the film.

In a superb piece in *Commentary*, the New York film critic Richard Grenier explains the precise respects in which Mr Beatty himself as Jack and Diane Keaton as Louise Bryant prettify the historical personages they represent. Louise was, it seems, not the dedicated feminist of the film but rather an old-fashioned minx who schemed her way to celebrity in the traditional fashion. It was she who made advances to Eugene O'Neill, and not the other way round (as the film makes out). Nor was she a particularly talented journalist. When she went to the front in the First World War, the one story she filed was spiked. Neither of them was much cop at writing fiction or poetry. Although the bare facts of their relationship and their travels are shown in the film more accurately than in most film biographies, their *characters* are consistently travestied. They were neither of them villains; but they both seem to have been naive, egotistical, and feather-headed, although full of courage, curiosity and spirit. And their story is certainly full of action, and comes to a dramatic conclusion. John Reed died of typhus in 1920 at the age of 33 and was buried at Lenin's express command under the wall of the Kremlin, a Soviet hero among other Soviet heroes, even if he had almost certainly begun to be disillusioned by the Revolution. Louise Bryant later married the millionaire, William Bullitt, FDR's first ambassador to Moscow; after their divorce, she took to drink and then drugs, and died in Paris, a sad wreck, in the 1930s.

NOW WE DO NOT EXPECT, even nowadays, Hollywood to tell it precisely like it was. We accustom ourselves to the familiar conventions of the Big Picture, among them: that, in order to indicate the passage of time, the hero and heroine shall always celebrate Christmas round a poignantly decorated Christmas tree, even in the middle of the Bolshevik Revolution; that, in default of children, the hero shall present the heroine with a pet, preferably a slobbery kind of dog; that the hero shall invariably be lovably clumsy (he bumps his head on chandeliers, he makes a terrible mess in the kitchen, he burns the dinner); that if called upon to die, the protagonist shall look interestingly pale, but not so pale as to lose allure (Ali McGraw in *Love Story* was generally thought a fraction too rosy);

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that when struggling through a mob of thousands, the heroine should be able to spot the hero within thirty seconds (otherwise the customers begin to shift in their seats).

Film critics take for granted these concessions to popular taste as the price that has to be paid for putting any interesting theme on the screen at all. They are professionally attuned to look for the extraordinary, that is, those passages where the director heroically refuses to pander to popular taste. The canny director therefore secures the élite audience by putting in scenes of knotty political discussion between the various factions of the American Left. We are impressed, not by the descriptive power shown in these scenes, certainly not by the way they illuminate the whole story of Jack and Louise, but by the fact that, skimped and confused though they may be, they are in the finished film at all. Warren Beatty is thus to be considered doubly courageous: first, for making a Big Picture with Reds as stars; second, for showing them *being* Reds, even at the risk of boring the audience.

Our aesthetic appetite satisfied by these pieces of artistic courage, so the critic's line goes, we should not complain too much about the minor glamorisations. We have seen something brave and unusual in the history of Hollywood, and we ought to be grateful.

AND YET is the romanticising quite so skin-deep as the critics allow? Is there quite so much courage to be grateful for? "Jack Reed's the only American to be buried in the Kremlin, that's quite something", says one of the chorus of ancients. So indeed it is. It's a First, an answer in a *Mastermind* quiz.

It would be quite something too to be buried beneath the second tree from the right in the garden at Berchtesgaden. But that would not, I think, be enough to induce Warren Beatty to make a film lasting 3 hours 19 minutes on one's life and times. There is still an asymmetry of indulgence in what is culturally and ideologically *chic*. The Bolsheviks are forgiven actions which the Nazis would, quite rightly, not be forgiven. Besides, Jack Reed's death comes nice and early in the history of Soviet Russia. He can be depicted as already a little disillusioned and vaguely percipient of the horrors to come. He can remain uncontaminated by Joseph Stalin, or even by some of V. I. Lenin's nastier acts.

Equally important, though, he can remain free of the contamination of total recantation. Romance is fatally blemished by *too much* disillusion. It is hard to write poems to a lake after you have made a precise analysis of how much raw sewage flows into it.

IT IS ALL RIGHT for the viewer to reflect, on closing the book or leaving the cinema, "If only he had known, it was all in vain—but he had marvellous ideals—and he was so brave and so young to die. . . ." For the consumer of romance, the bitter after-taste is part of the total experience. But the romantic protagonist cannot admit to full consciousness the suspicion that he may have made a fool of himself; he cannot look *sheepish* and still remain romantic.

Romance demands a cut-off point. THE END must roll up on the screen not too long after the completing of the grand gesture. Jack Reed would be in his nineties if he were alive today. Suppose he had left the Communist Party at the time of the Purges, got a responsible government job in Washington during the War, perhaps come to live in England in recent years, possibly even contributed to these pages, retired to a cottage in Wiltshire with his third wife, even learnt how to cook. No film. At least no film starring Warren Beatty and Diane Keaton.

Moreover, history, even romantic history, tends to celebrate celebrity. History to the dim does not say "*Alas*"; it says "*Shut Up.*" Jack Reed witnessing an unsuccessful revolution, or a revolution in a small country, would be much less filmworthy. It is his association with a huge engine of power which raises him above the common run of journalists who have happened to be in the right place at the right time (by no means a negligible gift). Here we enter murkier psychic territory. If the Revolution had turned out not only successfully, but amicably, would that too not have damaged its romantic potential?

Suppose Kerensky had hung on—suppose the results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly had not been overturned by the Bolshevik putsch—suppose Russia had, after famine and bloodshed, stumbled on to a form of liberal constitutional democracy.

No doubt John Reed would still have been in Russia to witness the whole business. It would still have been a big story. In those circumstances, Reed, being an American, by birth and training an ideologue only for the principle of democracy, might have switched to supporting Kerensky or his successors. A tame bourgeois-liberal ending. Again no Great Motion Picture.

IN THE Landseer exhibition at the Tate Gallery, there is a picture of a stag at night standing on the edge of a Scottish loch, while halfway across the loch may be seen the head of another stag swimming across to lock horns. In typical Landseer style, the picture is entitled "Coming Events Cast their Shadow before Them." It is this portentously pregnant inflation of the actual image on the screen which raised the big money. "Here's this guy, he's just an innocent reporter who believes in people, for chrissake, little does he know. . . ."

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The film feeds off our foreknowledge. It is the shadow of coming events—horrible, bloody events—that adds weight and dimension to Jack and Louise, the two innocents abroad. The film *needs* Stalin and Beria.

Now for the unenthusiastic spectator an obvious moral contradiction thrusts itself forward. How can we applaud John Reed's gesture of commitment if we know what that commitment led to? We cannot accept vague or implicit assurances that "his ideals were marvellous, but they just got a little perverted." We are, after all, dealing with an adult man who is nearly thirty years old and engaged in political activity; and politics must be judged by results, like any other activity, particularly as the matters involved are matters of life and death. Can the film-maker retain his own innocence by merely using the shadow of coming events for enhancing the *chiaroscuro*, without spelling them out in their full horror?

IT IS THE ABSENCE of John Reed's funeral from the film that gives away the bad faith behind the whole enterprise. In romance, the scene of the funeral and the designation of the last resting-place often provide the most touching finales: "Scatter his ashes at sea. . . ." "Let my bones be laid to rest in good English/French etc. soil. . . ." "They carried him slowly up the hill, the honest men of Loamshire. . . ." "There's some corner of a foreign field. . . ."

Reed's funeral was spectacular, his last resting-place even more so. After his death in the Marinsky Hospital, his body was taken to the Temple of Labour where it lay in state for seven days, guarded by soldiers of the Red Army. On 24 October 1920, the leaders of the Communist International and the Moscow Soviet gathered in the Temple of Labour and escorted the body through the streets of Moscow to Red Square. Thousands of workers are said to have marched behind the coffin, and a band played, over and over again, the Funeral March of the Revolution. At the graveside by the wall of the Kremlin, Nikolai Bukharin, Karel Radek, Alexandra Kollontai, and other Communist leaders delivered funeral orations. Quite a send-off.

Yet Mr Beatty dare not *show* us these things. For they fall the wrong side of the cut-off line. To be buried by mass murderers among mass murderers at the headquarters of one of the greatest of all tyrannies—no, these things cannot be shown.

ALL FORMS of romance have to be swathed, at least part of the time, in swirling mists, in order to conceal the consequences of the romantic hero's actions for other, less romantic human beings who have crossed his path and finished up deserted, starving, widowed or dead as a result. Our breath has to be taken away to stop us counting the cost. The German Romantics rightly sensed that both the *Sturm* and the *Drang* are essential—the storm to confuse our senses and make our eyes water, the push to rush us off our feet. And that, I fear, is where Warren Beatty misses out. He is too slow, too painstaking to knock us in the aisles; he leaves us too much time to think. And these pauses for thought cannot help pushing us towards the conclusion that Reed was simply an American innocent way out of his depth. To be innocent is not the same as to be romantic or to inspire romance, for if we are aware of innocence, we must also be aware of guilt; we must have eaten of the tree of knowledge which blights romance.

At Harvard, Jack Reed, though not himself a first-rate footballer, was said to have been the greatest cheerleader the football team had ever had. He kept up this reputation to the end of his short life. During the rejoicing at the end of the Second Congress of the Communist International, two months before Reed's death, after the singing of the *Internationale* he seized the opportunity to fulfil his ambition to carry Lenin shoulder-high like a victorious footballer. Together with Paul Freeman, an Australian syndicalist, and Owen Penney, an American anarchist, Reed advanced on the smiling Soviet leader. Freeman grabbed one leg, Reed the other, and Penney hoisted Lenin's bottom. Lenin, startled and annoyed by this unfamiliar American custom, protested violently and then began kicking furiously, raising a nasty bump on Penney's forehead.

This incident is not in the film. Alas for Mr Beatty, the trouble is that Lenin, if not alive, is still kicking.

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LETTERS

Brideshead Revisited

MR EDWARD PEARCE (ENCOUNTER, March) asserts that *Brideshead Revisited* is "a hymnal to the true English vice . . . snobbery!" and he claims that "More than anything else it celebrates the aristocracy as a kind of virtue. To be one of the long-enobled, to live in a house with wings and a chapel, is a state of grace from which no trifling human defects can detract." That is not only ill-written, it is also undiscriminating.

Anyone who thinks that Evelyn Waugh in *Brideshead* is publishing a hymnal (or does Mr Pearce mean singing a hymn?) to "the true English vice . . . snobbery" might first pause before the character of Mr Samgrass. He indeed shows that "adulation" for the aristocrats combined with "a cold-eyed determination to join" them which Mr Pearce rightly perceives as the essence of snobbery and wrongly ascribes to Charles Ryder. Samgrass is the snob, and he is repellent. Of the aristocrats themselves we see but two families: the Mulcasters and the Flytes. The Mulcasters (Boy and Mrs Charles Ryder) are presented with a distaste tempered only by amusement: not objects for adulation, a set Ryder is trying to leave, not join. But of course, the question must be settled with reference to the Flytes.

And can anyone suppose that *they* are presented as objects of the author's adulation? Here one must distinguish more clearly than does Mr Pearce between author and narrator. Ryder is simply in love with a family (not with a class, *vide* his very different feelings for the Mulcasters) and his view is not meant to be normative; Waugh, for his part, views the Flytes with a mixture of sharp criticism and defiant sympathy.

First, the criticism. Lady Marchmain is shown to be the most subtly baleful character in the novel: everything she touches withers. Her husband performs no social function while holding great estates; he has deserted his lands and his wife to live abroad with a mistress; and when he comes home it is not to set his house in order but to die, after disinheriting his eldest son. This son is a fool (though not merely a fool), devoted to the collection of match-boxes and to a vulgar woman who is explicitly incapable of continuing the line. The younger son is driven into exile, and the two daughters are forced to seek their salvation in milieus far from aristocratic. The Flytes do not prove equal to their inheritance, and the emblem of their inadequacy is Brideshead, the house, always too grand for any human action it protected and at last left an echoing shell without an inheritor. The sweep of this view of failure is so broad as to imply the failure not of a family but of a class, the very class which Waugh is accused of regarding with blind adulation (and the failure, incidentally, is made bitter and definitive in the treachery of Ivor Claire in *Officers and Gentlemen*).

Thus Waugh sees the landed nobility (not "the gentry" as Mr Pearce has it) as failing and passing, yet even as they pass they embody some values which he holds dear, and which he fears may pass with them. These include a sense of tradition, a freedom from some forms of pettiness, and a certain decorum. These are not the noblest qualities, nor are they contemptible.

Nor are they the highest values which the novel celebrates, for *Brideshead Revisited* is not, as your commentator has it, "a hymnal . . . to snobbery" "interwoven with a very forgettable tract for triumphalist Catholicism", but is essentially a religious novel whose social setting, though spectacular, is secondary. Religion—not class—is at the centre.

Ryder does not in the end join the Flytes, in accordance with the "cold-eyed determination" ascribed to him by Mr Pearce. He gets neither Julia nor the house, and his sole inheritance from the family he loves is that religion whose law separates him from them. And yet at the end he is not discontented. Just as the main development of the novel can be described only in religious terms, so it is primarily in relation to religion that the principal characters are differentiated and organised.

Lady Marchmain's destructive force proceeds from no social failing but from the fact that she alone of all the family wears her religion easily and uses it for her own purposes: for her, an end has become an instrument, and the instrument turns in her hand. Round Lord Marchmain's deathbed Waugh orchestrates not a social chorus but a complex set of attitudes to belief: the unquestioning professionalism of the priest; Cordelia's simple and passionate faith; Cara's inseparable tangle of popular superstition and naive belief; Julia's reluctant and fearful acceptance of what she has so long fought to reject; and in the centre Lord Marchmain's silent, mysterious, and final submission.

And outside it all, Ryder's controlling scepticism. But Ryder through the action of the very event he is witnessing, is brought eventually within the charmed and suffering circle, outside which Rex Mottram will stand for ever. He is the ultimate outsider, not because he is brash and Canadian, but because he lacks the very faculty of belief.

I do not think that *Brideshead Revisited* is either a great novel or a wholly successful novel; but it should be recognised as a religious novel, free from the gross faults attributed to it by Mr Pearce.

P. R. HARDWICK

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Lancashire

"The Armenian Question"

I TAKE IT that at least two of the aims of Professor Norman Ravitch's article, "The Armenian Catastrophe: Of History, Murder and Sin" (ENCOUNTER, December 1981), was to prove how Western scholarship has been entertaining, in large measure, a "Turkophile approach" in analysing the "Armenian problem" and also to emphasise that such approaches could not satisfy those Armenians who speak of what Professor Ravitch prefers to describe as "Turkish sin and Turkish wickedness."

Judging from the number and the content of books and articles written by Armenians and their Western friends which fall short in living up to acceptable criteria, we in Turkey have frequently thought just the opposite to be true. Professor Ravitch, likewise, points out that most of the parties to the controversy have been unable to face the events without blinding passion.

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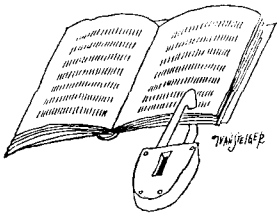
To take the matter briefly to its roots, one should recollect, in all fairness, the fear the expanding Ottoman Empire inflicted in Western hearts; the unfavourable and biased image in Christian minds of Islam as some sort of heresy; the belief that minority peoples in the Ottoman Empire should be assisted in their quest for independence; and Turkish participation in the First World War on the German side. All contributed to the creation of a "Turkish image" which affected every evaluation.

Studies on the coverage of Turkey in Western mass media show lack of accurate information as to both the past and the present of this country, and especially in the handling of the Armenian episode. Edward W. Said's *Orientalism*, which Professor Ravitch refers to only in passing in footnote 7, is a scholarly compendium excoriating the "Orientalists." Bringing the point closer to the Armenian issue, one instantly recalls Lord Bryce, whose evaluations in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* Professor Ravitch gives the impression of sharing. One can not help but remember at this point however, that Lord Bryce stated flatly in *Transcaucasia and Ararat* (London, 1896, p. 404) that the Turks had produced no administrators, no thinkers, no writers, no artists and no poets. How can one rely on such writers, who evidently know nothing of Turkish culture and history? It is recorded—as indeed a prejudice in need of correction—in the publications of the Council of Europe that certain Western European textbooks refer to wars with the "wild Turks" without saying another word about them (Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf, *Education in Europe: Section II, History Teaching and History Textbook Revision*, [Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 1967], p. 50). There has been a consensus in the meetings of the Council for Cultural Cooperation (of the Council of Europe) that the Turks appear in Western textbooks only when they are taking part in some Western episode, such as being at war, or threatening war, with the West; that is, as the antagonists (or friends) of Western powers, involved in the fortunes of the Greeks, Armenians and the like. They are simple-mindedly represented as "warriors", especially "justifying" Gladstone's phrase of the "Terrible Turks."

QUITE TO THE CONTRARY, we in Turkey contend that Turkish standards of tolerance have been generally high (often higher than those of the Europeans), that we have not indulged in religious persecution (as in Western Europe), that our *millet* system enabled the minorities to live in adequate security and ease (a rather "progressive" case compared to Western practice at that time) and that we have experienced no anti-Jewish atrocities. Professor Ravitch's article does not make sufficient reference to this general framework, without which—we believe—Turkish issues cannot be put into proper perspective. But he even mentions, through an Armenian source (Armand Arabian), Adolf Hitler, who is represented as having "referred to the Armenian fate as an example of the lack of world concern for unpopular minorities. . . ." What the Nazi leader has to say about the Armenian episode is not really worthy of remark. But where is the original docu-

"The Hell of Castro's Jails" . . .



Paris

THE SPANISH *writer Fernando Arrabal, who lives in Paris, has just written to the President of the French Republic asking him to meet the wife of the Cuban poet Armando Valladares, who has been shut away in Castro's jails and concentration camps for over 20 years—"the world record for imprisoning a writer", as Arrabal says. "What used to happen in Franco's jails", Arrabal says (whose experience was at first-hand) "doesn't come anywhere near the barbarity with which Valladares has been treated."*

The poet's wife, Marta Valladares, is at present touring the capitals of Europe in an attempt to mobilise international opinion. During her stay in Paris it was with exemplary dignity that she described the hardships endured by the man whom she first met in prison, while she was visiting her father (also incarcerated as a "counter-revolutionary"), and whom she married soon afterwards.

"MY HUSBAND was arrested in December 1960", she says. "He was 23 years old. Two weeks later he was sentenced to 30 years in prison. To begin with he was a sympathiser of the Revolution, like most of us, but he stood up against the radical Communisation of the régime.

"In 1961 he was transferred to the Isla de Pinos, nicknamed the 'Isle of Youth', and was nearly shot because he had tried to escape. Three years later he was condemned to forced labour in a marble quarry. When he set out in the morning he never knew whether he would be coming back at night. Many of his fellow-prisoners had died at the hands of the guards.

"In 1966 he was moved again, this time to the prison of La Cabana in Havana, a colonial-era fortress built by the sea. Armando, who is asthmatic, suffered a great deal from the humidity of *les fosses*, the pits—that's what they're called—where he and other political prisoners had to live. It was there that I met him, in 1969. His parents and I were supposed to be allowed to see him once every three months, for two hours; but often the visits were cancelled.

"He was continually beaten and humiliated. He is one of the rebels: those who do not accept the programme of Communist re-education. If he had

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THE HEADLINE in *Le Monde*, so unusual in this context, was: L'ENFER DES GEÔLES CASTRISTES. The cruelty of Valladares' situation was emphasised by his Cuban fellow-prisoner Reinaldo Arenas, in his interview in ENCOUNTER (January, p.60).

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ment in which he is supposed to have mentioned the Armenians? A leaflet distributed by Armenian demonstrators somewhere in the West mentions 22 August 1939 as the day when Hitler is quoted as having spoken of them. The official texts of talks and speeches attributed to the Nazi leader have been published in a number of reliable sources, principally the Nuremberg documents. I have before me the text of that speech, which does not refer to the Armenians at all! Will Professor Ravitch kindly check his Armenian source with pp. 338 and 523 in Vol. XXVI of Tribunal Militaire International, *Procès des Grands Criminels de Guerre devant le Tribunal Militaire International: Nuremberg, 14 novembre 1945—1er octobre 1946* (Nuremberg, 1947)?

To relate the highly controversial Armenian episode to Hitler and the anti-Jewish Holocaust does an injustice to the Turks in more ways than one. Not only did Armenians serve in high public office and in local government during the Ottoman period, but the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey were both safe harbours during the time of the Inquisitions as well as of modern fascist mass murder. The Armenians, who governed themselves and maintained their own schools, churches and courts, were perhaps the most prosperous community in the whole empire.

The crux of the matter for us is that the Armenians did not form a majority in any province of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman provincial yearbooks (*salname*) record in detail, however, the names and functions of Armenian officials who served in administrative, secretarial and technical fields. I think it is generally acknowledged that the Turks trusted the Armenians, even in fiscal matters. Professor Ravitch could have reminded us of G. Nouradingian's appointment to one of the highest offices in the empire as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE suggested that the Armenians were a minority scattered among the Turkish majority and that their aspirations could not have been satisfied without tremendous injustice to the Turks. What some Christian groups hoped to achieve was to drive out the Moslem Turkish majority. Bilâl Şimşir has published volumes of European records, in the original Western languages, to document how millions of Turks were, for decades, pushed out of the Balkans.

Professor William L. Langer was not the only historian to describe the Armenian revolutionary movement as "national socialist." The Armenian-American writer K. S. Papazian (in *Patriotism Perverted*) brands the Dashnags as undemocratic and irresponsible, as well as being terroristic. The same Armenian author notes that the Dashnag government in the Caucasus repudiated the claims of Armenians in Turkey by signing the Treaty of Gümrü on 2 December 1920.

Another Armenian source, Louise Nalbantian (*Armenian Revolutionary Movement*, University of California Press, 1963, pp. 110–111), says that "agitation and terror were needed to elevate the spirit of the people" and that "the most opportune time to institute the general rebellion for carrying out immediate objectives was when

. . . the Case of Armando Valladares

signed a document repudiating his own stand and proclaiming the benefits of the Revolution, and then followed it up with a course of Marxist indoctrination, he could have obtained an alleviation of the conditions of his detention. But he has never done that.

"He was also sent off for three years to a prison in Oriente province where no one could visit him. He lived in a completely isolated cell, with no notion of day or night. In 1974, back again at La Cabana, he and all the rebel prisoners were kept without food for more than forty days. Six of them became permanent invalids, my husband included. Since then he has needed a wheel-chair.

"In prison he started to write poetry, which he managed to smuggle to the outside. Since his first collection of poems was published in 1977, his conditions of detention have deteriorated. He has been sentenced to 'solitary' several times. For the past two years he has been forbidden to receive visits or letters. He can't read anything. The Bible I sent him was confiscated. The last smuggled letter I received from him dates from June 28th of last year."

MME MARTA VALLADARES *showed us this letter. Like the poems, it was written in microscopic handwriting, in mercurochrome, on toilet paper. In the new prison in Havana, the "Eastern Complex" where he is now incarcerated, there are more than 300 "historic" prisoners like him, rebels whom Castro refused to release at the same time as the several thousand detainees amnestied in the late 1970s. There was an attempt to make them wear the criminals' uniform, and they refused. Now they live in their underwear.*

The poet describes how he has to sleep on concrete, contact with which has opened sores on his body. His cell is airless and dark. Next to him is a wooden drawer pierced with a hole: his chamber pot. He spends his days on his invalid's chair. The prison authorities have refused to give him the brand-new wheel-chair sent him by a Dutch group of Amnesty International.

Except in 1978, when he was in hospital in Havana for several months, he has never received any medical assistance. He and his wife have found themselves being offered the following deal: in return for a public retraction—of everything which has been said or written about his ordeals—the prisoner could be freed, and his parents authorised to leave Cuba. The poet rejected this "moral suicide."

In his dungeon he has drawn a tiny man on a wheel-chair, in front of the gigantic wall of a penitentiary, with birds flying overhead, and surrounded by flowers. And he has written:

"The more my physical space contracts, the further my spiritual horizons spread. The more intense the repression and the torture, the stronger and more resistant my inner framework grows. I am a free man."

LE MONDE (*Paris*)

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Turkey was engaged in war." In that spirit the Armenians committed the worst of the atrocities, wiping out entire villages. Armenian massacres of Moslems were at times so numerous that the Russians had to pull them back to the rear lines during 1914 and 1915, to stop the barbarities.

Professor Ravitch does not, unfortunately, dwell at any length on the interest of certain great powers in the perpetuation of the Armenian question. Many historians agree that the Armenian revolts were closely related to the "Eastern Question" and that they did not necessarily stem from Turko-Armenian relations only. Each foreign power, be it Britain, Russia, France, Germany or the United States, wanted to "solve" the Armenian problem in a way favourable to its own interests. The famous commission under the chairmanship of the US General James G. Harbord reached the conclusion that both Turks and Armenians suffered from mutual murders; and that even if the exiled Armenians returned to their original abodes, they would still form a minority.

These references should in no way be interpreted as attempts to undermine the importance of the events. The Armenians—and the Turks—suffered during the last years of the Ottoman Empire. Even if only one Armenian—or one Turk—had died or been killed, that would be one too many according to the standards that all of us today want to see reign in the world.

Several of Professor Ravitch's suggestions—such as the "forgotten genocide"; prophesies like the Armenian community redoubling "its already extraordinary efforts to recall its tragedy"; and his concluding remarks about whether "the defeated Armenian nationalism . . . deserves in the future to have its claims recognised"—bring to mind the recent assassination of several Turkish diplomats. The professor might well have pointed out, even in passing, that such acts are against the basic principles of international law.

TÜRKKAYA ATAÖV

Ankara University
Turkey

Reply

THE CRITICAL TONE of Professor Ataöv's letter surprises me. He seems to accuse me of sharing a view of "Turkish sin and wickedness" popular among British liberals in the 19th century, a racialist view I treated with ironic disdain in my article. He also seems to find that I lack an appreciation for Turkish and Muslim toleration of religious minorities. In fact, I paid ample tribute to the Muslim superiority over Christians in this important area. Finally, though I was critical of William Langer's views, I hardly demonstrated naivety about the goals of the Armenian nationalist movement. Professor Ataöv is really avoiding the basic issue.

Neither pro-Armenian nor pro-Turkish, my article was an attempt to place the tragedy of 1915 in an historical context in which, finally, both the Armenians and the Turks emerge as victims: they were both victims of European-style nationalism and great-power imperialism. But what about 1982?

Armenians have a right to have their history correctly written. They do not have a right to seize a piece of Anatolia for the creation of a new Armenian state, nor to assassinate Turkish diplomats. The Turks, it seems to me, have a duty to recognise the misdeeds of their government in 1915. Such an admission in no way should lead automatically to territorial compensation for the great-grandchildren of the victims.

The truth, however, makes its claims upon all parties, scholars and intellectuals in particular. I should hope Professor Ataöv and more of the Turkish intellectuals would recognise their obligations to the truth.

NORMAN RAVITCH

University of California
Riverside
USA

The Ghost of Yalta

IN HIS REPLY to my strictures (ENCOUNTER, December 1981), Lord Gladwyn says (March) that the Yalta "Declaration on Liberated Europe" was "useful" because it provided a possibility of "subsequent repudiation enabling it to be used as a bargaining counter in negotiations."

What he forgets to mention is that this "useful" instrument has not been used at all for the purpose indicated!

In his recent book based on Foreign Office records, *Britain and the Cold War* (London, 1981, p. 362), Victor Rothwell provides relevant information:

> "The ink was scarcely dry before the Russians showed clear evidence of an unwillingness to stand by any reasonable interpretation of the Declaration [on liberated Europe] in Rumania and in Poland. . . . At an [Foreign] Office meeting in late February 1945, as recorded by Jebb [now Lord Gladwyn], it was decided 'to let sleeping dogs lie' and 'not to invoke the Declaration at all' [except to influence . . . American policy in areas of 'vital interest']."

Thus, the noble Declaration was forgotten within two weeks after it had been solemnly proclaimed; and, of course, it was never used as a "bargaining counter", only as a (rather transparent) fig leaf, or a window dressing. Lord Gladwyn still considers it "useful", although he already recorded 37 years ago that it was not going to be invoked in any negotiations with the Soviet Union.

At the time prominent in Foreign Office post-War policy planning, he believed there was "no reason to despair of a perfectly amicable arrangement with the Bolsheviks."[1] He thinks that "in the atmosphere prevailing in 1945, this was a pardonable aberration." This is surely a proposition as applicable to Munich as to Yalta; and one must also remember that the policies symbolised by these names were conducted long before 1938 and 1945.

It may well be that "Europe would have been carved in 1945, Yalta or no Yalta." But that supposition in no way undermines severe and serious objections to the "Yalta policy" of which the conference itself was a culmination. The policy of political concessions to Stalin started much earlier, shortly after he had been attacked by his Nazi partner; and, after all, the Yalta conference only confirmed the decisions on Eastern Europe which were already taken at the Teheran conference in November 1943.

Was Yalta "inevitable", as Lord Gladwyn asserts? Only if one assumes that the illusory premises of this

[1] Quoted from a Jebb minute (13.5.1944) in Elizabeth Barker, *Churchill and Eden at War* (London, 1978), p. 290.

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policy were themselves inevitable.

Tolstoy remarked in *War and Peace* that all historical events appear inevitable in retrospect; but this is a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. If one realises—with or without "the benefit of hindsight"—the weaknesses of this policy and its contribution to the unfolding events, one is bound in logic to admit that a few less illusions and a little more foresight could well have made a real difference to the outcome. For instance, Western military strategy might have been significantly different if it was based on more realistic post-War expectations; Stalin's power-political probes might have been resisted rather than acquiesced to; Western self-deceptions might not have been so assiduously fostered (reinforcing from above the ridiculous "atmosphere" of euphoria about "Good Uncle Joe" which created a feedback from the bamboozled public to the myopic governments in Britain and the USA). In any case, with fewer illusions, the West would have been better prepared for the post-War situation.

The ideas on the basis of which Lord Gladwyn and his superiors were planning for it were quite mistaken, as he admits himself when he concludes that "the innermost thoughts [of Western leaders] as quoted by Labedz make strange reading. . . ." But he is still reluctant to abandon his "curious inconsistency" and criticise not

Whose Double Standards?

WHY *are Western liberals so anxious to embarrass and vilify the United States, seizing every opportunity to cast suspicion on the genuineness of that country's commitment to individual freedom? Last week, for example, at a televised press conference, a* Guardian *correspondent publicly pilloried the American Secretary of State for applying double standards, in that he deplored rule by generals in Poland, while condoning it in, say, Chile or Turkey.*

In terms of winning a debating or propaganda point, the *Guardian* is obviously on to a good thing, since there is something theoretically inconsistent about the American position, just as there was about Britain's wartime willingness to fight for freedom in company with Stalin. Complete moral consistency is an unrealisable ideal in foreign affairs. Some blurring at the edges is inevitable. A hostile critic, therefore, can always spread cynicism and scepticism by asking awkward questions, as Lord Haw Haw used to do about the genuineness of Britain's hatred of tyranny, in light of her alliance with Russia. But why should friends of America want to discredit her good faith by the same kind of mischievous sophistries?

REPRESSION *in Chile and Turkey may be as morally reprehensible as that in Poland, but what makes it less disturbing is that it does not serve the cause of the Russian empire. Evil is always evil. But a strong man bent on evil is more dangerous than a weak one, because he can do more harm. That is why it makes sense to react more vigorously to repression conducted in favour of the Soviet Union's interests than to repression conducted against the Soviet Union's interests, because the evil consequences of the former could be so much greater than those of the latter.*

General Pinochet is not less evil than General Jaruzelski, but he is less dangerous, because he is not an agent of the Soviet Union.

OF COURSE, repression is repression, and torture torture, wherever it happens. In the eyes of God all those engaged in such practices may be equally guilty. But not equally dangerous in the eyes of a sensible American Secretary of State, whose job it is to be practical, not philosophical. General Pinochet is not part of a great concentration of military power dedicated to the extirpation of individual freedom throughout the whole world, whereas General Jaruzelski is. *Guardian* leader writers may choose to pontificate from an ivory tower where such distinctions make no difference. But statesmen have to be concerned with the realities of power, which means recognising that an evil giant is likely to be the more harmful than an evil pygmy.

YES, *this does mean applying double standards; getting much more worked up about evil in the Soviet empire, or in areas linked to that empire, than about evil in other parts of the world, since the Soviet empire has the will and the means to spread that evil.*

This is a practical, not a moral judgment. The Soviet empire is in the business of exporting repression; boasts that it wants to repress us. *Nor is it any longer reasonable to regard this as an altogether idle empty threat, because she has built up a thermonuclear armoury second to none.*

Why should it be wrong, therefore, for the United States to react to every new manifestation of Soviet repressiveness with greater alarm than to equally nasty manifestations in other parts of the world which pose no comparable threat, or no threat at all?

THE STAMPING OUT of liberty in Poland is far more ominous than the stamping out of liberty in Chile or Turkey, because it is part of an operation with world-wide implications, just as the growth of liberty in Poland was far more inspiring than the growth of liberty would be in Turkey and Chile for the same kind of reason.

Were those who regarded the rise of *Solidarity* as something different, far more significantly encouraging than similar stirrings in other, non-Communist autocracies, applying double standards? Of course they were, and rightly so, because both repression and freedom behind the Iron Curtain are special, arousing greater hopes and greater fears than do the same developments elsewhere. The good news from there deserves a more heart-felt cheer, and the bad a more heart-felt groan, because what is at stake may affect the whole future of mankind.

Of course the Americans are right not to regard General Jaruzelski as indistinguishable from General Pinochet. Because their circumstances are so different, so must be the West's judgement on them, as much in terms of awarding blame as glory.

Peregrine Worsthorne
in the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

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only the illusions of the *Détente* policy, but also the earlier and not dissimilar illusions of the "Yalta policy."

For me it is not a question of "pardonable aberration" nor one of allocating blame. To abandon the habits of wishful thinking—and to clear the webs of diplomatic obfuscation of yesteryear—is necessary for a clarification of both past and present world-affairs.

YALTA is still very much with us. To justify his subdued reaction to General Jaruzelski's *coup*, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt said that the West "decided in a meeting in Yalta to divide Europe practically into spheres of influence"; at the same time, President François Mitterrand, while acting similarly, proclaimed the need for "getting out of Yalta."

In the United States, Dr Zbigniew Brzezinski suggested that the "Yalta agreement" should now be renounced; Professor Arthur Schlesinger Jr. criticised him for that, saying that "what we need is not renunciation but the effectuation of the agreements made at Yalta" (*Wall Street Journal*, 14 January 1982).

In London the editorial in *The Economist* (9 January 1982) proclaimed that the Helsinki Final Act has removed the legality of Yalta decisions.

Can one make sense of all this confusion of voices and viewpoints? It should be obvious that, just as in my ENCOUNTER debate with Lord Gladwyn, the present position depends on whether one accepts Yalta's declarations at "face value", or whether one looks at the real implications of Yalta decisions in history. To endorse Yalta now by referring to the dead letter of its "Declaration" is like legally invoking conjugal rights in a marriage which has not been consummated in 37 years. Where has Professor Schlesinger been all this time, and why did not he raise earlier the issue of implementing the Yalta "Declaration"?

I am afraid that present challenges cannot be effectively met by whitewashing Yalta. Many of the people who invoke it, do so in the spirit of a "Yalta policy" for today. Not so Lord Gladwyn. I prefer his inconsistency to their consistency. But why not try being both right and consistent?

LEOPOLD LABEDZ

Survey Magazine
London

AUTHORS

Helen Harris is 26. She has published stories in a number of magazines, including the *London Magazine*, and in the recent *Firebird 1: New British Writing* (Penguin), and is working on her first novel.

Stanislav Andreski is Professor of Sociology at the University of Reading. His books include *The Social Sciences as Sorcery* (André Deutsch, 1972) and *Reflections on Inequality* (Croom Helm, 1975). His earlier article on the effects of "The Syphilitic Shock" appeared in the October 1980 issue of ENCOUNTER.

Hyam Maccoby, Librarian of Leo Baeck College in London, is the author of *Revolution in Judaea* (Orbach & Chambers, 1973) and *The Sacred Executioner*, a study of the concept of human sacrifice and its legacy of guilt, which Thames and Hudson will publish in the autumn.

Tony Harrison's most recent book of poems is *Continuous* (Rex Collings, 1981). He is the translator of the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus, recently performed at the National Theatre in London.

Ernst Topitsch, Professor of Sociology at the University of Graz, is the author, among other studies, of *Erkenntnis und Illusion* (Hoffman & Campe Verlag, 1979).

Edward Pearce is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph*.

Benedict Nightingale is theatre critic of the *New Statesman*. Among his contributions to ENCOUNTER have been essays on Joe Orton (March 1979) and Harold Pinter (February 1977).

John Elsom was until recently theatre critic of *The Listener*. His most recent book is *Post-War British Criticism* (Routledge, 1981).

Charles Barr is a Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of East Anglia. His article on film culture, "Pod-Persons and Sign Systems", appeared in the October 1980 issue of ENCOUNTER.

Rupert Wilkinson is Reader in American Studies at the University of Sussex. He writes, "I find myself using aspects of language more and more in my studies of American culture (cf. 'On the Toughness of the Tough Guy', ENCOUNTER, February 1976), and wrote this particular article in order to learn why."

Ferdinand Mount writes a weekly political column for *The Spectator* and appears regularly in London's evening newspaper, *The Standard*. His "alternative history" of love and marriage, *The Subversive Family*, is published this summer by Jonathan Cape.

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Life & Letters Today

New York City

MARKSISM: **Mayor Koch's administration, which successfully used a public-relations effort last year to persuade New Yorkers to use less water, is preparing similar campaigns designed to reduce litter and graffiti in New York City.**

The campaign will consist of radio and television commercials and subway posters. Previous such efforts leaned heavily—and futilely—on warnings of jail terms. This time, the sales pitch is a call for youngsters to "make your mark in society, not on society."

NEW YORK TIMES

London

END QUOTE: *Every so often, a quotation sweeps through the world like an epidemic. Hemingway must have cursed the day when he unearthed "for whom the bell tolls", which began as a reflection on mortality and ended as a facetious crack about the telephone. A caution to all leader-writers and speech-makers: there is nothing so powerless as a quotation whose time has come and gone.*

THE LISTENER

London

WAUGH MONGERS: *"Brideshead Revisited" ought to be marvellous on the screen—such actors, such ceilings, so much money. But it is not. It is slow and flat and worst, worthy—the one thing Evelyn Waugh could never be accused of being [Ferdinand Mount writes].*

This is sad because the television adapters have treated the book so reverently, too reverently in fact. (Well, nobody said we were going to be easy to please). Almost every line on the page is repeated on the screen. What can be read in a couple of evenings is stretched out into months.

On the flyleaf of the first edition in 1945, it says **"Produced in complete conformity with the authorised economy standards."** *In the austerity years the book's disgraceful charm was gulped down like a double sweet ration. Now, alas, it seems to have been drowned by the money and stuffed in aspic by the scenery.*

THE STANDARD

London

MELTING POT: *School cookery classes which don't include information on Indian and Chinese meals are guilty of racial discrimination, says the Commission for Racial Equality.*

And painting classes that don't take in a study of non-European art are equally as bad.

It doesn't matter if all the children in the cookery class are as English in their tastes as roast beef and Yorkshire pudding . . . or if there's not a single black or yellow face in the class, according to the Commission.

What counts, it says, is that white children should not grow up regarding the culture of ethnic minorities as unimportant.

DAILY MAIL

New York City

R.I.P.: *In most of the stories about the Brink's Bank hold-up (or "heist"), the robber and guards who were slain were described as "shot to death," which may be acceptable to sloppy writers as an idiom, but is worth resisting.*

When it comes to killing by shooting, the correct expressions are "shot dead" and "shot and killed"; for cases in which the death occurs hours or days after the shooting, "shot fatally" or, if you prefer the archaic, "mortally wounded."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

Port au Prince, Haiti

COMIC STRIP: *The inspection of my baggage by the Haiti customs on my arrival was embarrassingly thorough. The more impatience I showed the longer the local control officer took over each item in my valise [Karl Kraenzle writes]. Among my papers and books he discovered a copy of Graham Greene's novel about Haiti called "The Comedians". He took his time as he leafed slowly through the pages, but his face showed nothing of his feelings. He then indicated I could put my belongings together. But then he said he would have to keep the volume. Still, I could have it back when I came through again for departure. "Savez, Monsieur, ce livre n'est pas gentil." He said it as if he had been personally insulted: it simply wasn't a nice book that Graham Greene had written about Haiti.*

ZÜRCHER TAGES-ANZEIGER

Houston, Texas

FACT & FICTION: **Much hue and cry lately has focused on the rising number of functionally illiterate Americans, but two recent news items point to what may be an even more appalling problem.**

One story reported that thousands of persons were moved to call a fake phone number used in a television drama about a TV evangelist; in the other story, an actor who played an emotionally disturbed youth in an Academy Award-winning movie said that fans continually approach him in public and ask if he has recovered. While these two items at first elicit a chuckle, the humor pales if they are seen to herald a definite trend—that U.S. audiences cannot tell fiction from reality.

Traditionally, when audiences approach a drama or work of fiction they employ what Samuel Taylor Coleridge called "the willing suspension of disbelief." That is, they realize that a drama is a work of art rather than a depiction of reality, and accept its conventions and limitations. The nation is in trouble if American audiences have made this suspension of disbelief permanent and forgotten their duty to rejoin the real world after the end of the show.

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

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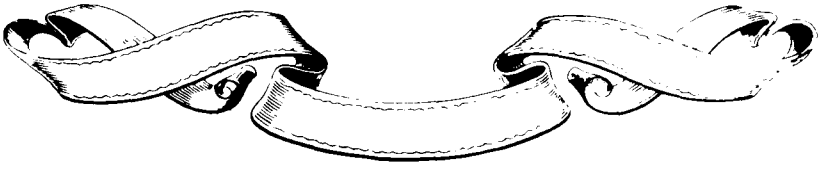

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